

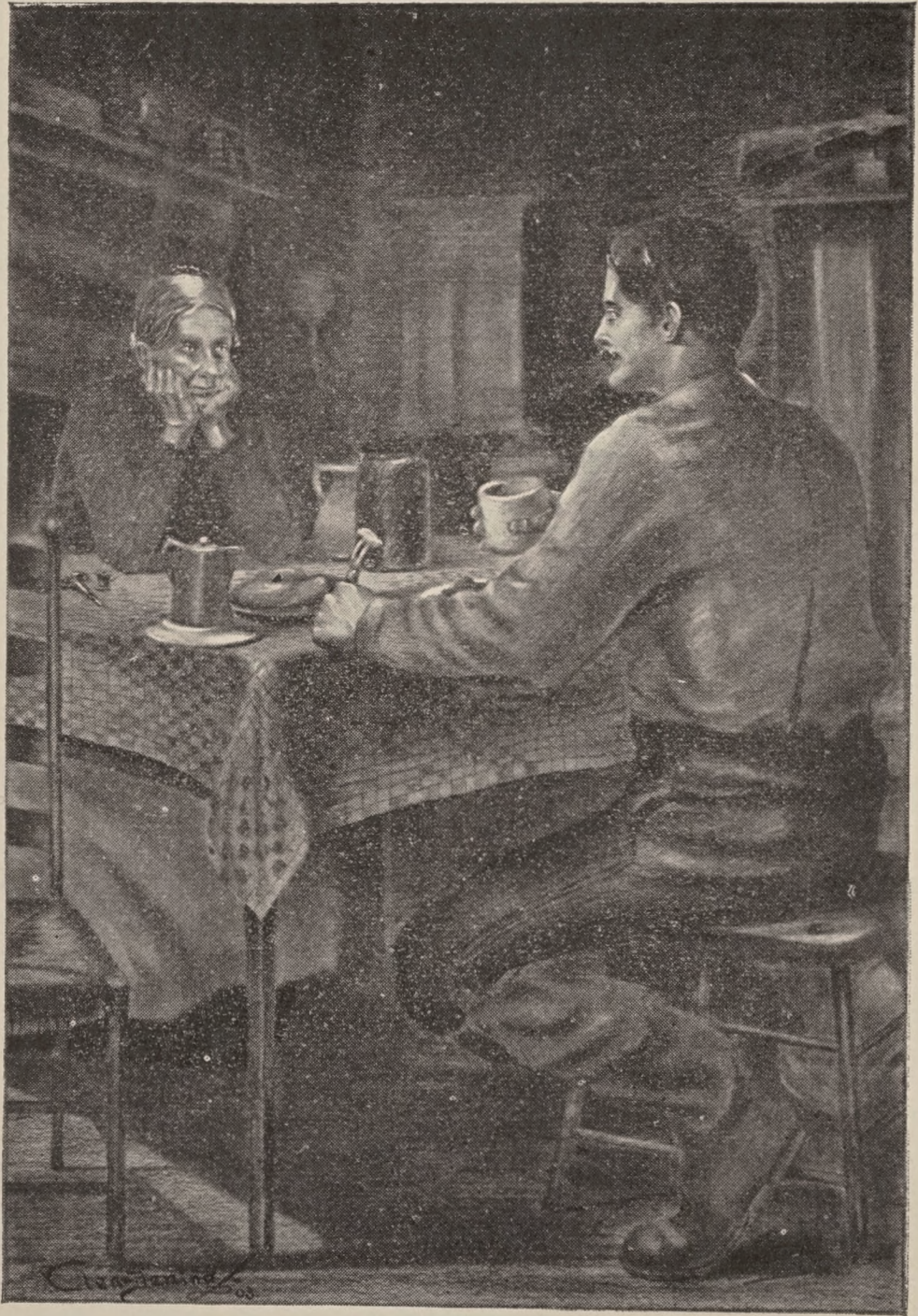


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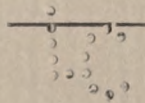
“MOTHER, I WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE”

HOW ZACH CAME TO COLLEGE

—BY—

J G. CLINKSCALES

LABOR OMNIA VINCET

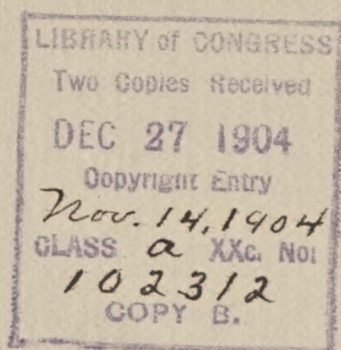


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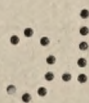
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To the patriotic, self-sacrificing widows of the Carolinas who, after the great Civil War, craved the best things for their sons, this book is affectionately dedicated
by THE AUTHOR.

Spartanburg, S. C., Nov. 5, 1904.



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"Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

"If a man loves his neighbor from the heart, he will do him no wrong. If a man's word is his bond, he needs no oath. All the outward observances in the world will not make evil thoughts blossom in righteous deeds. But if the heart is full of love, every outward act will be beautiful."—*J. R. Miller.*

"It is not by books alone, nor by books chiefly, that a man becomes in all parts a man. Study to do faithfully whatsoever thing in your actual situation, there and now, you find either expressly or tacitly laid to your charge; that is your part; stand to it like a true soldier. A man perfects himself by work much more than by reading. They are a growing kind of men that can wisely combine the two things—wisely, valiantly can do what is laid to their hand in their present sphere, and prepare themselves withal for doing other wider things, if such lie before them."—*Thomas Carlyle.*

"Whatever study tends neither directly nor indirectly to make us better men and citizens, is at best but a specious and ingenious sort of idleness, and the knowledge we acquire by it, only a creditable kind of ignorance—nothing more."—*Lord Bolingbroke.*

HOW ZACH CAME TO COLLEGE

CHAPTER I.

"That man is but of the lower part of the world that is not brought up to business and affairs."—OWEN FELTHAM.

SPARTANBURG, one of the leading cities in the Piedmont region of South Carolina, was once a hamlet, absolutely wanting in city ways and city aspirations.

The modest little village was the "town", the market place, for the hardy mountaineers living in the border counties along the North Carolina line. To Spartanburg they brought their apples, chestnuts, turnips, cabbage, "taters", and their corn—as much of it as they did not turn into "mountain dew". Long trains of "mountain schooners", drawn by oxen and burdened with

“garden truck and sich like”, slowly winding their way “to town”, were familiar scenes to the people living along the many country roads leading from the mountain fastnesses to Spartanburg. Nor can it be denied that the “sich like” meant not infrequently the juice of the apple rather than the apple itself; for the sturdy mountaineer thought it not wrong to get his apples and corn over the hills with the least expense possible. What if it did mean the killing of a few revenue officers? If Uncle Sam got in the way of their support for wife and little ones, he must “go down”.

A number of years prior to the Civil War, and for a decade after its close, Spartanburg boasted of one railroad, and Spartanburg was its northern terminus. That fact increased the importance of the little village, added to her dignity, and she became the shipping point for a considerable portion of upper South Carolina and not a little territory beyond the North Carolina line. So the wagon trains moved regularly, until Spartanburg's single railroad pushed its way to Ashe-

ville, and other roads came to emancipate the steer and make the "mountain schooner" a thing of the past.

One warm, lazy June day in the early '70's, there stood in a store door in Spartanburg two men—one, the proprietor, Maj. John A. Lee, the other a young mountaineer. The mountain lad had on no coat, but stood six feet two inches in his rough brogan boots, into the tops of which were stuffed his blue jeans trousers, and tipped the scales at 240 pounds. The pure air that surrounded his mountain home, and the regular daily work on the little farm, had developed him into a perfect animal. A coal-black moustache adorned his upper lip, while a well-shaped nose, slightly aquiline, and a pair of laughing brown eyes made him a man who would attract attention in any crowd. A single, knotted, twisted suspender wound its way across one of his shoulders and served the double purpose of holding up his trousers and affording a sling for one of his arms while he stood "at rest." The pantaloons were innocent of buttons, but their places

were supplied by a rusty nail, and a thorn, the latter plucked from a thorn bush that stood by the road leading from his mountain home to the embryo city.

This attractive specimen of physical manhood knew little of books, but had learned much in the school of experience. He knew the haunts and habits of the mountain deer "as the seaman knows the sea," and to the raccoon and 'possum was a constant terror. And not a few of the hides of these animals, as well as the flesh of the deer, he sold in Spartanburg. He had watched men closely, had blushed because of many things that he knew to be wrong about him, and had dreamed of a higher life.

It was a dull day with the merchants. Few countrymen were in town, so our mountain lad and Maj. Lee talked leisurely of the weather, the change of the moon, and the prospects for a pinder crop. Our hero had great confidence in the big-hearted merchant, and no little admiration for the man that "knowed so much." He had sold him his load of "truck," and was just

waiting for his steers to "eat a bite" before beginning his long journey homeward.

Stroking his heavy boots with one end of his long whip handle, the young man raised his brown eyes till they met those of his friend, and then said, with some hesitation:

"Major, whut's that?"

"That's a bell, the College bell; they are having Commencement over there to-day," replied the gentle, sympathetic merchant.

"Whut is Commencement, Major, and whut is a college?" asked the lad, this time an expression of intense interest spreading over his face.

The kind-hearted business man consumed several minutes endeavoring to convey to the mind of the young man some idea of what a college is supposed to be and do, and of what is meant by the word commencement when used in this way, and then said:

"I am going over to attend the exercises, won't you go along with me?"

"Don't keer if I do," was the quick reply, and the mountaineer shambled off to his cart to get

his coat with the apparent delight of one who has just received a new view of the possibilities of life.

The coat, when the dust from the oxen's fodder had been shaken from it, was donned, and the young man raked his chubby fingers through his somewhat disheveled locks, his heavy wool hat was pushed up in front, and he walked off with his friend, the words "college" and "commencement" ringing in his mind and heart as he struggled to get at their meaning—ringing almost as sweetly and encouragingly as the old college bell rang into his natural ears. The coat did not fit well—a little too tight it was, with the sleeves just a shade too short, but what cared the young man for that? It was spun and woven and made by the stiffened fingers of his widowed mother, one of God's uncrowned queens, and it covered the back and the throbbing heart of a guileless man.

After a walk of fifteen minutes, the two reached the College and were conducted by the ushers to comfortable seats where they could hear every

word spoken by the young men of the graduating class.

Wofford College had on her gala-day attire. The floral decorations, arranged by the hands of gentle women, were a revelation to our mountaineer. He had seen nature in all her loveliness among the crags and peaks and in the valleys of his mountain region. He loved the wild flowers with all his soul, and had plucked them often for his mother, but never before had he seen blossom and bud arrayed in such dazzling beauty. He had heard music, too, sweet music as it came from the fiddle and the bow and rivaled the mellow laughter of the mountain lassie; he had "cut the pigeon wing," despite his heft, at many a country frolic; but never before had he heard such entrancing music as that string band poured into his opening soul.

The spacious auditorium was crowded with elegantly dressed women, wise men, and bubbling buoyant youth. The mountaineer was bewildered, but it was delicious bewilderment. He was in a trance.

But the exercises must begin. The dazed mountaineer watched with intense interest the long line of students file into the hall and the fifteen members of the Senior Class take their seats on the rostrum preparatory to delivering their graduating speeches.

There were in that class some splendid speakers. They had the graces of the born orator.

One of the number is to-day a distinguished lawyer in the city of New York. Our mountaineer looked and listened with eyes and ears and mouth open. Not a word escaped him, though many he did not understand. He was moved and swayed as never before in all his life.

After one particularly patriotic address in which the young orator spoke of the "Lost Cause, the Blood of Southern Boys" and "The Graves of the Gallant Confederate Dead," the band played Dixie, and the audience "went wild."

When the applause subsided, our mountaineer leaned over and whispered to his friend, the merchant: "Major, I'll speak up thar one o' these days."

The Major was surprised, almost amazed at what he heard, but made some courteous reply, and the two turned their attention to the next speaker.

The pleasant occasion came to a close. The valedictorian of the class "had his say." He talked to his classmates of the pleasant years spent together, of the hard-fought battles, of the victories and defeats, then wished them "a pleasant and successful voyage over life's tempestuous sea," and bade them a "long farewell." The diplomas were distributed after the orthodox fashion, the President's few parting words being delivered in Latin, and the commencement was over.

The students repaired to their homes and boarding houses—the mountaineer to his cart. On the walk from the college, he spoke but few words. He was thoughtful. That day, a purpose was born in him. He is another man.

CHAPTER II.

HASTILY yoking his steers, the mountaineer flung into the cart the few articles purchased in the morning, and turned his face homeward. The purchased articles were few—just a little sugar and coffee and a calico dress for his mother, the queen of his mountain home. That was a warm afternoon, the road was a long and dusty one, and the faithful oxen labored hard though they drew but little more than the weight of their patient master. Old Towser, the trusty watchdog and constant companion of his master, trotted lazily under the bed of the cart, sometimes on the shady side. His tongue was hanging out and he panted fearfully. The master munched his lunch, a bit of bread and a part of a squirrel his mother had prepared for him. He ate, not because he was hungry, but from force of habit and to attest his appreciation of his mother's never-failing thoughtfulness of his comfort. The

mountaineer was living over the experiences of the forenoon. The cattle had their own way.

After the sun had set and while the song of the whip-poor-will was echoing and re-echoing among the hills, they came to one of those beautiful streams that wind their way across upper Carolina, and man and beast satisfied their thirst, the mountaineer using his unlined wool hat as a dipper.

The mountaineer was accustomed to talking to his steers and his dog, and, no doubt, if these dumb brutes could have spoken, they would have expressed surprise at this strange, long silence of their master. The lapping of the dog, the evident pleasure experienced by the thirsty steers, as well as the quenching of his own thirst, reminded him of the fact that he had neglected to give the animals water before leaving Spartanburg, and immediately loosened his tongue.

"Towser, old fellow," said he, "that's right, lap it up, hit will do you good. You shell hev a good supper, too, as soon as we git home, a real good supper to make you strong. The warmints

must be kept outen the corn—they mustn't have a grain of it. I shell need it all. I'm gwine to college, Towser; won't you find the raccoon and the squir'l fur me, and can't we git a few minks, and a bear or two?"

The ears and face of the brave old cur bore many evidences of deadly conflicts with the raccoon; and though he could not speak, he whined and barked his joyful assent to all that was proposed, and fairly churned the water in his efforts to kiss his master's hand. It was the only language the dog could command, but the master understood it.

Then he turned his attention to the steers, now quietly listening to all that had been said, and affectionately told them of his purpose.

How long they stood talking in the stream they knew not, but the hooting of an owl just over the hill broke the spell, and the mountaineer began talking to his cattle in the language of the whipthong, a language full of meaning and music when the long whip is handled by a master of the art. As there is music for the trained

hunter in the "mouthings" of his pack, so is there concord of sweet sounds for the expert driver in the regulated cracking of his whip.

The mountaineer noticed now for the first time that they were still many miles from home and that it would be late, very late, before they could reach the end of their journey; nevertheless, the lash was not allowed to touch the backs of the steers one time, for they were tired and hungry, and their master was their friend. The song of the whiphong, however, quickened their pace somewhat, and they were now off, in dead earnest, on "the home stretch."

Towser, chilled by the cooling stream in which he had rested, leaped for joy, and barked his delight until the provoking echo of his own musical voice arrested his attention, and he ended the performance with an ominous growl. The master heard the echo, too, and thus soliloquized:

"I wonder whut that means and how it is. They call it echo—whut is echo? I don't know. Can they tell me at college? Never mind,

Towser, I shell find out and tell you whut it is."

Mile after mile was covered by the steady team, the master, meantime, lapsing into his thoughtful mood, after laughing at the antics of the spiteful little screech-owls that brushed the crown of his wool hat with the tips of their wings and viciously snapped their beaks just above his head.

The stars were out now in all their beauty and grandeur. Occasionally a meteor darted across the heavens, and the mountaineer said to himself and to his dumb friends: "Now what do that mean? They say it's a fallin' star. Do the star fall? My Bible tells me the mornin' stars sing together—does they really sing? I can't hear the music, but I b'lieve they do. I know they dance, and I sometimes think I can see 'em weepin'. Mebbe they do weep. Mebbe they weeps over the sins of human critters. God knows—I don't."

Crossing a narrow valley now, on either side of which the hills seemed to rise one above

another till they met the stars and rolled them in their laps, the joy of this uncultured son of the mountains knew no bounds, and he gave vent to his feelings by uttering a long repeated yell that reverberated among the hills until it seemed to shake their very foundations. Then taking up his whip, he said: "Now, Susie, old gal, sing us a song. See the hills and the stars and the valley; now, talk it out, old gal, talk it out, good and strong."

Standing on tip-toe in the wagon, the mountaineer twirled the long whipthong above his head with such strength and such regularity of movement that the metric cracking of the deer skin seemed to provoke the whole mountain region to a fit of ceaseless laughter. Then he laughed a good natured, jolly laugh that died away down the valley in a whisper; and, patting the long whip handle with his left hand, he said tenderly: "Well done, Susie, well done, that's the way to talk it out; I know your language; it is music to my soul—it is the song of my deer skin."

CHAPTER III.

A FEW hundred yards farther old Towser pricked up his ears, and, with a sharp bark, bounded away to investigate a noise he heard ahead.

“Be keerful, Towser, be keerful, sir; you know your failin’; come back now to your place and keep cool.”

Like his master, old Towser was game from tip to tip; each feared neither man nor devil—each recognized but one master. But Towser was obedient, and, taking his place immediately in front of the steers, he stiffened every joint in his body and uttered an ominous growl that meant fight, and fight to the death, for the right of way.

After a few minutes old Towser scented old Jack, one of the few negroes living among the mountains, and changed his growl to a whine of recognition.

“Hello, Marse Zach, dat you?”

"Hello, Uncle Jack, whut you doin' out here this time o' night?"

"Sho nuff, dat's you; I knowed 'twus you. I heeard Susie's voice; the Lawd bless yo' soul, mun, you oughter bin whar I wus to hear her speak. She farly tar round dar 'mong de rocks and hills, and I think I could jess see you smile while you standin' dar in the wagin tryin' to hole 'er down and mek 'er regilate 'er voice. Dat I did, suh; I could jess see you. Yes, suh, Susie sing a song right tonight. An' ole Bill, my ole hoss here, ole fool, he git skeerdt, an' mek lak he gwine left me dar een de road, but I fetch him a whack 'cross de hade wid dis stick and fotch him to he senses. But I knowd 'twus you, an' ole Towser, dar, he might knowed 'twus me a-comin', fur it look lak any dog whut kin smell a 'coon good es ole Towser kin, oughter smell a nigger clean 'cross the mount-ing."

The mountaineer was not displeased that the old man liked the song of the whipthong, but noticed that he had not answered his question,

So he repeated, "But whut you out so late fur tonight, Uncle Jack? And whut's dat you got thar in your cornsack? I think that's a jug."

"O, go 'long, Marse Zach; don't bodder 'bout whar ole nigger gwine. Don't you know I 'spectable darkey?"

"Yes, Uncle Jack, I know you is lacked by the white folks, but le' me gi' you a piece o' my jaw; you quit totin' whiskey fur dese fellers. They'll git you into trouble. The fust news you know dese revenue officers will hev you in jail."

"Das so, Marse Zach, das so an' I promise you I gwine quit it rite now. Dat I do."

Jack was a good old ante-bellum darkey that everybody liked, but he had one great weakness: he loved whiskey. But, like many white men, he would promise reformation anywhere and at any time.

"Marse Zach, I mighty glad I meet you to-night. I jes' fixin' to go over ter yo' house to-morro' to tell you 'bout it."

"'Bout whut, Uncle Jack?"

“ 'Bout dat bee tree I fine yistiddy. Yas, suh, down dar not fur fum de Gum Spring on de lower eend uv yo' ma's plantation. I find a bee tree. De big popular dar, suh; you know whar 'tis. An' I was jis' comin' over tomorro' ter tell you 'bout it an' ax you let me he'p cut it down an' gi' me leetle o' de honey fur Dinah an' de chillun.”

“Why Uncle Jack, I am mighty glad to hear dat. Is you sho' it's a bee tree? An' does you think dere's much honey een it?”

“Sho, suh, sho; an' I'll bet ole Bill gin Towser dar's fifteen gallons honey in it.”

“Well, we'll not bet 'bout it, but I hope you air right. It will be a great he'p to me. You see, Uncle Jack, I've got to make uver cent I kin this summer; I mean to go off to college nex' October an' git a edication, an' dat honey will sell powerful well in Spartanburg.

“An', Marse Zach, whut is edication, an' whut you gwine do wid it when you git it?”

“To git a edication, Uncle Jack, means to larn somethin’, an’ git wise an’ useful an’ able to do somethin’.”

“Bless my life, Marse Zach, you de wisest an’ de ablist white man in dese mountings now, ’ca’se I hear a mighty putty little gal say so yistiddy. She say you de bes’ lookin’ man in North Caliny, and can trow down an’ lick anything whut walks on two foots. I don’t see whut you gwine do wid dat thing you call edication when you git it.”

The smile that had wreathed the face of the mountaineer quickly gave place to a frown. For the first time since the birth of his purpose, the thought, “What will Katie say of my plan?” rushed through his brain and for an instant took his breath. As soon as he could get control of himself he said, with some deliberation:

“Well, come over tomorrow at 8 o’clock, Uncle Jack, and we’ll cut the bee tree. Good night.”

“Good night, Marse Zack, you’ll hev ter mek Susie sing anudder song, ef dem steer git you home ’fo’ de chicken crow.”

Susie sang only a note or two, but they were full of meaning, and the now rested oxen bounded forward with alacrity. The mountaineer put Susie in her place and said with a deep, long-drawn sigh: "And what will Katie say?"



CHAPTER IV.

“These two things, contradictory as they may seem, must go together,—manly dependence and manly independence, manly reliance and manly self-reliance.”

—WORDSWORTH.

IT was long after midnight before the tired steers halted under a shed in the yard of the humble mountain home. The driver patted their throbbing flanks and spoke kind, appreciative words to them, for he valued the services and respected the feelings of his faithful, dumb servants as only a man of heart can do. Having watered and fed the steers, the mountaineer went into the house and was met at the door by his devoted mother who had not closed her eyes, but had watched and waited through all the long hours for the home-coming of her son.

“Come in, my son, come in, you be late to-night; I am so glad to see you,” said his mother in a gentle, sweet voice.

“Thank you, mother,” said the mountaineer,

tenderly kissing the woman who had given so much of her life for his own comfort and happiness. "You haint bin skeerdt, is you, mother?"

"No, no; I wusn't skeerdt,—but I couldn't he'p feelin' a leetle oneasy 'bout ye."

"Why, mother, nobody in dese mountings would hurt me."

"No brave man would, my son, but you know thar is so menny mean people on de yearth. The folks knows that you don't favor mekin' and sellin' liquor, and I jist got to thinkin' that mebbe some of 'em mought like to have you outen the way. I couldn't sleep till I seed you safe and sound at home. But you must eat your supper,—I know you is monstous tired. I tried to keep your supper warm by pushin' the chunks together. The coffee is good and warm, but I'm afeard the bread is cold."

"Thank you, mother; I aint hongry, but I'll eat jest fur your sake,—you is so good an' kind to keep my supper warm fur me."

"Did you feed the critters, son?" the thoughtful mother asked.

"Yes, mother, the steers is watered and fed."

"Now then draw up a cheer and eat a bite yourself and then go to bed, fur it's almost time to git up and then you hain't had a wink o'sleep."

The obedient son threw himself into a chair which he dragged to the side of a little table and devoutly gave thanks to God for all his blessings. The mother took a seat directly in front of her son, placed her elbows on the table, rested her chin in her hands and lovingly looked into the face of her boy who ate with a "comin' appetite."

"I want you to try some of this fresh honey, Zachie, with that bit o' meat. I think you'll find it nice; I robbed a gum today and got a fine chance and accordin' to my taste hit is a fine quality too; hit ought to bring a good price in town, did you ax whut honey is fetchin', son?"

By this time the mountaineer had tasted the honey and, smacking his lips, said: "It is certainly fine, mother, and will fetch the top o' the market. But I furgit to ax the price; this is been a big day fur me, an' I furgit sev'al things that I 'spected to 'tend to."

Here the son, knowing that he had before him one who could sympathize with him, though she might not understand or appreciate fully his plans, opened his mouth and heart, and told her all he had seen and much of what he had heard, and then said: "Mother, I want to go to college, and ef God will gi' me health, and you will he'p me, I will go, and I'll promise you to mek a man that you will be proud of. Will you he'p me, mother?"

The gentle little woman, whose heart throbbed always in unison with that of her stalwart son, brushed a tear from each eye with the corner of her homespun apron, and said in a calm, clear voice: "God knows I'm proud of you already my son; you has always been a joy to your widowed mother, and you kin nuver do ennything to mek me love you better'n I do now; but your happiness is my happiness and your plans is my plans. When the Lord tuck yo' brave father, I promised Him that ef he would spar you to me I would do my best to bring you up in His fear. He has answered my prayers and you hev not

disapp'inted me. These han's has worked hard fur ye, my son. They tremble sometimes now, but I kin do a good deal yit, and you shell hev the best that I kin do to he'p you carry out your plans."

The big-hearted mountaineer was now standing by the side of his mother, and, taking her tenderly in his arms, he said, with a choking voice: "Thank you, precious mother, I want to l'arn somethin' fur your sake."

It was now late, or early, and time that both were sleeping, but the new purpose born the day before, and now become the purpose of both promised such a radical change in the plans of both lives that sleep was banished from their eyes.

Long and lovingly talked mother and son. The mother's whole mind was now bent on devising ways and means for getting her son off to college.

"Whut time does you hev afore the college begins again, son?" asked the mother thoughtfully.

"I will have to leave home the fust of October, mother."

"Three months and a leetle better," said the mother, more to herself than her son.

"We kin do a great deal in that time, Zachie. There is plenty of grass now, and the cows is doin' well. Old Spec will be givin' milk in eight or ten days, and her milk is very rich. We'll deny ourselves and sell all the butter. Then the bees is doin' well, we'll sell lots o' honey. And I'll mek the chickens and eggs fetch us more money. I have twenty young turkeys now, and I found another turkey nest this mornin' with thirteen eggs in it. I'll do the best I kin with all these and kyard and spin and weave the wool. You kin go to town every two weeks and turn somethin' into money."

"Yes, mother, I know you will do much more'n yo' part. But, mother, it hurts me to hear you talk 'bout denyin' yourself ennything."

"My dear son, is it not a pleasure for me to deny myself ennything for you? Did I not deny myself many a night's sleep when I nursed you

through that awful spell o' scarlet fever? And hev not yo' love paid me fur all my trouble ten thousand times over?"

Then with a husky voice the mountaineer said: "God bless you, mother; with you on my side I kin do anything."

"Zachie, my son, do you hear that rooster? It is 'most day—do go to bed and git some sleep. You can't work bethout sleep."

"Fur yo' sake, mother, I'll go. I am not sleepy, but I'll go to bed, so that you may lie down and git some rest. Good-night."

Zach walked into his little room and, throwing himself upon his knees, he reverently thanked God for his loving, sympathetic mother; begged him to spare her life many years, to spare his own life, and give him health and strength to carry out his plans for improving his mind, and promised in return a life of faithful service.

Then, jumping into bed, he slept the sleep of the innocent.

CHAPTER V.

THE sun was peeping in through the crack under the door that morning long before Zach's eyes opened to the light. How long he might have slept is not known, but "Uncle Jack" was true to his promise and came at the appointed hour to cut the bee tree. Old Towser "winded" the African, yelped a note of warning and aroused his master from his slumbers. Zach was soon bathing his face in the cool, clear water that flowed out from the mountain not many feet from the back door of the little house, and felt ashamed that he had slept so late while his mother was up preparing his breakfast for him.

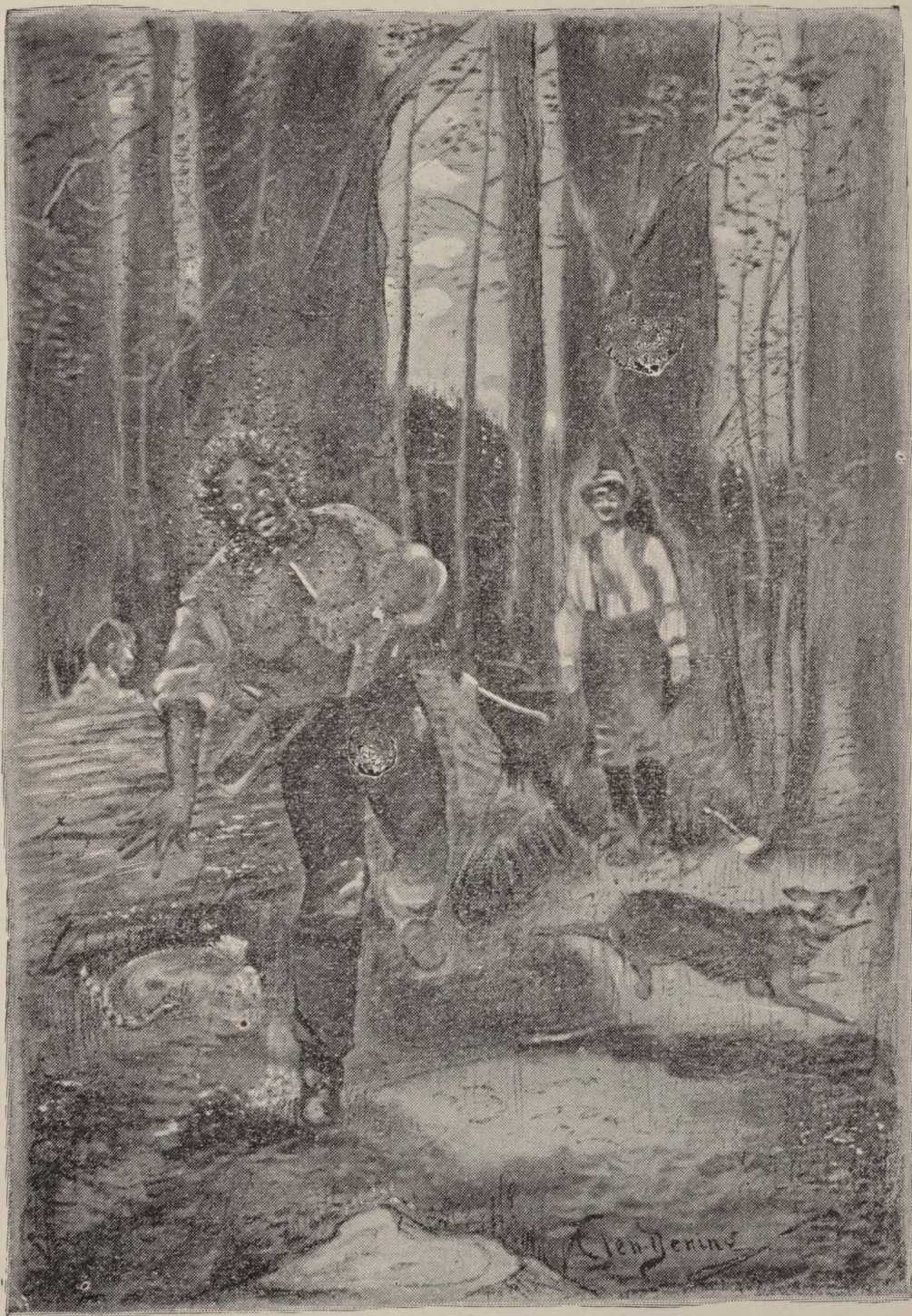
The two sat down to breakfast and, while eating, again discussed their plans for the summer. The son told his mother of old Jack's find near the Gum Spring, and of his promise to give the old negro some of the honey for his assistance in cutting the tree. The mother had known bee trees to be found containing many gallons of

honey, and expressed the hope that old Jack's find might be a genuine bee tree and contain an abundance of honey and the honeycomb. "Your success or failure this mornin'," she said, "may be a sign of good or bad luck in your summer's work. But Zachie, my son, what will Katie say?"

"I hev thought of that, mother; I hev thought of all that. Katie is a sensible gal. and will not stand in the way of my plans."

Old Jack waited as patiently as possible for the mountaineer to finish his breakfast, but stimulated by Dinah's joyful anticipations, was anxious to try the temper of his keen-bladed axe on the big bee tree. After a ten-minutes' walk the two stood at the roots of the large poplar not far from the big Gum Spring. The trained eye of the mountaineer saw at a glance that it was the home of a colony of bees, and, in all probability, contained many gallons of honey.

It was an unusually large tree. "My Lawd," said Uncle Jack, "Marse Zach, dat tree must be five foot tru de butt-cut."



“MY LAWD, MARSE ZACH, COME HE’P ME FIGHT DESE BEES!”

"I think not, quite, Uncle Jack," said his friend, "but it mought be four foot."

"Waal, howsomever, you'll arn de salt in yo' dinner 'fo' we git it cut down."

Towser and Zeno had been brought along and the mountaineer's old-fashioned flint-and-steel rifle. Every squirrel skin would go a little way toward swelling the fund necessary to defray Zach's expenses at college.

Spitting on their hands after the manner of the woodsman, the two fell to work on the tree, and for several minutes the large chips flew thick and fast. Stopping to "get their wind," old Jack said: "Marse Zach, s'posin' der be a coon in dis tree. De bees is way up yonder, and I see a hole up dar 'bout thirty foot whut look powerful slick lak some warmint bin crawlin' een and out."

"I hope we shell find a coon or some squir'ls in thar, Uncle Jack. I hev had sich luck in my time."

"Me, too; and I notice old Towser mighty busy out dar smellin' 'bout dem logs—I b'lieve

coon bin long dar since the chicken crow dis mornin'."

"Whar is Zeno? His nose is colder than Towser's," said the mountaineer, "and ef a coon's been along here since 4 o'clock, old Zeno will tell you 'bout it."

The words were scarcely spoken before old Zeno, known as the "strike dog," "gave mouth" just over the ridge.

"Dar now! Whut I tell you? Talk to him, old boy! Tell him 'bout it! When old Brer Coon put he foot on de groun' ol' Zeno sho to pass de time a day wid him," ejaculated old Jack, as much delighted as if he had found a new, crisp ten-dollar bill. At the first note from Zeno old Towser, with bristles up, bounded across the ridge to join him.

"Dat mought be a squir'l old Zeno smell," the mountaineer said.

"No, suh, narry squir'l; didn't you see old Towser's bristles and hear him whine? No, suh; dat old pup spilin' fur a fight. Dogs know each udder's words jess same ez me an' you. When

old Zeno smack he lips and say 'coon bin here,' Towser know jess de same lak you know when I tell you dis a bee tree. Yes, suh, dat a coon, an' you give old Zeno time and he'll show you whar dat old coon sleepin' now.'

The old darkey was right. The trail was a cold one and it was some ten minutes before Towser could "give mouth" at all, but the old fellow kept up a continual whining because of his confidence in the accuracy of the statements made by his companion.

"That's a cold trail, Uncle Jack; let's go on with the cuttin' and let the dogs cipher it out ef they kin," said the mountaineer.

"Dat's so," responded the old man, biting off a big quid from a twist of home-raised tobacco; "dat's a cole trail, but old Zeno will sho spile de res' uv dat ole coon dis mornin'."

With an occasional whoop of encouragement, the dogs were left to solve their own problem, while the two men plied their axes with renewed vigor, the old negro making with each stroke of his glittering blade that peculiar guttural noise so

common among regular wood choppers while running a race.

After crawling over and under fences, walking many logs, paddling up and down the branch and crossing and recrossing the ridge a half score of times, old Towser, warming up for the fight and uttering faster and faster that abrupt, quick yelp characteristic of the experienced coon dog, the faithful canines wound up at the roots of the big poplar on which the men were cutting.

The old man's joy knew no bounds, for the anticipations of delicious wild honey were augmented by the thought of roasted coon-meat. Indeed the white man and the black man drove their axes into the poplar with a will, this promise of a double reward greatly stimulating their efforts.

The tree fell at last. When it did, not one, but two coons ran out, to the infinite delight of both men and dogs. Each dog tackled a coon. Old Towser, in his effort to get at his, ran through the bees, now pouring out of the log in great numbers. The old veteran had fought

many bloody battles, but never before had he tackled coon and bees at the same time. He whined piteously, but never for once did he loosen his grip till he heard the cracking of the coon's breast bones and felt the ominous quivering of his muscles. The old negro saw the predicament of the notorious coon fighter and ran to his assistance. To his amazement the bees, with one accord, left the dog and literally covered him. For a while the old man got young again. He was "the combination of the mule and billy goat—he kicked with one end and butted with the other." "My Lawd, Marse Zach," he screamed, "come he'p me fight dese bees! Gemimy, Moses and Dinah, dey's killin' me! For Gawd's sake, Marse Zach, he'p me git my clo'es off, der's ten thousand in my britches." The old fellow had by this time rid himself of his tattered shirt and was vainly tugging at his pantaloons and rolling over on the ground.

"Run to the branch, you old fool!" cried the mountaineer. "Git in the water!"

Jack lost no time in getting to the stream and

buried himself in the water. The two men had neglected to take precautionary measures against the possible attack of the bees, and the old darkey was now paying the penalty of their thoughtlessness.

"Marse Zach," he said, as soon as he could speak, "how de name er Gawd kin sich things ez dem mek honey? 'Fo' Gawd, dey kin sting wid one eend an' bite wid t'other. My eyes is swellin', Marse Zach, an' yer some de leetle devils stickin' een my har yit."

The good-natured mountaineer, seeing the dogs had dispatched both coons, had withdrawn a safe distance from the buzzing bees, and, convulsed with laughter, was rolling on the ground.

The cutting of the bee tree proved to be a profitable enterprise. The skins of the coons would be ready for market as soon as they could be dried, and the tree was packed with the finest kind of honcy. Old Jack was given the flesh of the two coons, together with the honey he was promised for his assistance.

"Dinah an' de chillun will grin over dis

honey," said Jack, "but es fur me, I'll tek de coon meat; I got nuff dem bees. Bless Gawd, my head big ez a bar'l now, and wun my eye dun clean shot. I don't want no more honey. Good-bye, Marse Zach; guess nex' time old Towser fight coon an' bees togedder he kin fight it out hisself,—dis chile gwine tudder way."

The mountaineer and his mother were well pleased with the success of the morning. The coon pelts were nailed to the barn door in the place of two others that were dried sufficiently for market. That night a careful and accurate inventory was made of their available, marketable assets, and another trip to Spartanburg arranged for the following Monday morning.

CHAPTER VI.

“See first that the design is wise and just;
That ascertained, pursue it resolutely.
Do not for one repulse forego the purpose
That you resolved to effect.”

SATURDAY AFTERNOON found Zach at the home of Joe Langford just a mile and a half from his own. Katie must know of his new purpose and the sooner the better, so he determined to inform her at once.

It had been a busy day with Katie. Everything was prepared now for the Sabbath, and she had just finished milking when the mountaineer walked into the yard. The two seated themselves under a large elm tree that stood not far from the door of the cottage, and Zach thought the rosy-cheeked girl of seventeen never looked sweeter in all her life. The mountain lassie did not conceal her pleasure at the presence of her lover, and talked with her accustomed ease and fluency; and when Zach beheld her in all her loveliness, and thought of losing her after

all, his heart sank within him. A weaker man would have abandoned his purpose then and there, and set about completing the arrangements for wedding Katie the following November. But Zach was made of sterner stuff; with him the die was cast, and Zach was a man.

Taking his sweetheart's hand in his, he said in an awkward, stumbling way: "Katie, I loves you powerful, an' God knows you is the fust an' onliest gal I uver did love. I got sumpin to say to you an' sumpin to ax you, but I want you to think 'bout it good afore you answer me."

"Zachie," said the half-frightened girl, "whut is the matter wid you? Your han's is tremlin' and I never seed you look so tarrified,—whut is the matter?"

Then the poor fellow told her of all that he had seen and heard on his recent visit to Spartanburg, and told her of his purpose to have a diploma himself.

By this time he had gotten full control of himself, and lifting the white fingers to his lips he said in his gentlest tones:

“Katie, will you wait on me till I git my edication? Don’t answer me now, but think ’bout it, an’ answer me nex’ week.”

The face of the lovely girl, this simple-hearted child of nature, was clouded for a few seconds, and she said with a noticeable tremor in her voice: “But, Zachie, hit will tek you so long. We can git ’long bethout all that expense an’ trouble. Ma told me jist to-day that she would gi’ me Old Brindle an’ her calf an’ a new feather bed, an’ I already has six blankets and fourteen quilts. We-uns kin git along.” And Katie brushed a tear away that danced upon her long lashes in spite of the fact that she bit her lips in her efforts to keep it back.

“O yes; we could git along, but I wants more than jes to git along. I wants to larn sumpin and be sumpin and do sumpin. I don’t know how long it will tek me to git a edication. Hi mought tek me five year; mebbe seven. But did not Jacob work seven long year fur his wife, an’ can’t I ’ford to work, not lak a sarvant, but lak a free man—can’t I ’ford to labour an’ study

hard fur seven long year to larn sumpin an' mek myse'f worthy of sich a gal as you is?"

"Then you'll be a great man an' marry some rich city gal,—you will not look at Katie then," sobbed the innocent girl burying her face in her hands.

The mountaineer had grappled with the wounded bear in a death struggle and had licked a ruffian "out of his boots" for cursing him because of his opposition to "moonshining," but never before had he received such a shock as this. He was staggered by a sense of his utter helplessness. Trained in the school of experience to meet every emergency, however, he failed not in this. Raising the drooping head of the girl he loved, he looked into her tear-dimmed eyes and said:

"Katie, that hurts me. Don't do that. You don't understand me. I kin fetch you books an' you kin larn a powerful heap by readin' an' studyin' 'em. You know more than I does now. You have read several books an' I know you laks to read. I hain't read nothin' but my Bible."

That was a happy stroke. The girl brushed the tears from her face and smiled a sweet smile into the eyes of her distressed lover. By some chance a copy of Longfellow's poems and one of Hawthorne's Grandfather's Chair had fallen into her hands and she had read and re-read them until she was recognized as "the smartest gal in the mountings."

It was the thought of getting other books and of becoming educated herself that dried Katie's tears and reinstated the beautiful dimples in her cheeks. Raising both her hands as if about to pat his two fat cheeks, she said, in tones that thrilled her heart-sick lover:

"Zachie, do forgive me; I am so foolish. I know that you love me and that it is all for the best. I am only seventeen, and you will bring me books and I shell see you every summer and every Christmas; of course I will wait on you ef it takes you ten year stiddier seven." What happened then? Well, just let that be Katie and Zachie's secret. The stars were shining now and winked at one another significantly.

The mountaineer was supremely happy when he told his mother that night of Katie's approval of his plans. The next day at meetin' he "heisted the hymes" and sang as he had never sung before.

Zach's next trip to Spartanburg was a successful one. He had no difficulty in disposing of his "garden truck," honey and skins, and got fair prices for all. Indeed, Providence seemed to smile on the mountaineer's efforts during the entire summer. Many trips were made "to town," and never one without adding something to his small amount of cash. His mother was particularly successful with her dairy and poultry yard, and the mountaineer rejoiced that his hogs were entirely free from cholera and his sheep seldom disturbed by the hungry fox. Besides, his long rifle added not a few dimes to his exchequer, while Towser and Zeno did their full share.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN the old college bell announced the opening of another session on the 1st of October, the mountaineer was there ready for business. He wore a bright new suit of blue jeans and a pair of heavy boots, rough but clean. So tall, so large, so muscular, he looked a giant among the boys and young men there assembled. Indeed, his presence would have been hailed with delight if the game of football as now played had been known.

“The big fellow” was examined and assigned to the preparatory department. He asked no favors, but his quiet, unostentatious, and earnest manner impressed faculty and students that he came for business and meant to win. He hired one of the large rooms on the lower floor of the college building, installed a very small cooking stove, and in that room he lived, doing his own cooking and washing.

A few of the more fortunate students were

disposed, at first, to laugh at the idea of such an undertaking, but it was not long until the "big fellow in blue jeans" had the respect of the entire student body.

Unused to study, the mountaineer found his work very difficult and his environment very trying. He missed the fresh mountain air and the freedom of his untrammelled mountain life. For the first few weeks, there were times that sorely tried his manhood. Once or twice he was on the verge of wishing that he were back again by Katie's side and forever done with books and slates and college bells. But Zach was a man, and a man with a purpose, not a boy drifting with the tide. So, clinching his heavy fist, he brought it down on his little table with such force as almost crushed it, and said: "I am no genius, but I'm no fool; other men have learned these lessons and I can do it, too." And he did.

The weeks passed rapidly by, and the mountaineer found himself fond of his work and in love with his teachers and associates. His genial disposition and the honest earnestness of the man

drew others to him; and though he did not ask it, several of the best men in his class volunteered to assist him until he could "get on his feet."

The mountaineer's first year at college seemed to him very short as indeed is always the case with the earnest, faithful student who means to waste no time. But he was glad to get home again to press to his bosom his devoted mother and faithful ally, to romp with Towser and Zeno, and to look into the loving eyes of Katie, his black-eyed lassie.

The summer was spent very largely as was the previous one except that the mountaineer taught the public school for thirty days. In this he was eminently successful, winning the confidence of his pupils and, through them, the respect and admiration of their parents.

Many of his neighbors, particularly the young men and maidens of the neighborhood, believed that when Zach returned from college he would be "bigitty and stuck up beca'se he's got some larnin.'" They were disappointed, and when,

on the first Sabbath after his return, he walked up to a group standing in front of the church and said: "Why, hello, fellers, I am so glad to see you all again,—how do you all do?" their suspicions were thrown to the winds. He put his arm around the neck of one and said, "Bill, old fellow, how are you? You look just as natural as cornbread. Say Bill, how's your gal, is she as pretty as ever?"

Then Jim Snooks nudged Bob Satterwhite, and said, "By gosh, Bob, he ain't a bit biggity; dowed if he ain't the same old Zach."

Uncle Jack who now lived in the cabin on the hill near the Gum Spring, had "pitched the crop" and had managed it well, at the same time looking after the hogs and sheep and giving Towser and Zeno an occasional run over the hills after the coons that were bold enough to make depredations on his "roasting ears." Zach helped him to "lay by" the crop, before he turned school-master.

To him this was a delightful summer, though he spent not an idle day. Many an evening he

spent with Katie, looking into the depths of her beautiful eyes and listening to her talk of the books he had sent and brought her.

But Zach was ready to return to college when the time came. The little taste he had had, the sip at the fountain of knowledge had developed and strengthened his determination to drink long and well. It was during this second year a little incident occurred that made the mountaineer the hero among the college boys.

Our reader will remember that this was during the "reconstruction period." Federal troops were garrisoned in almost every city and town in our state. The very presence of the blue-coats made the negroes impudent and insulting to an extent which our Northern friends have never been able to appreciate. All over the South, for a dozen years after the Civil war, there were frequent clashes between the two races. In some cases, men were driven to desperation, and blood was shed. To be shoved off the side-walk in one's own town and be cursed by a former slave was just a little more than the

blue-eyed Anglo-Saxon could stand. A clash between the soldiers and the Wofford College students on account of the latter's resistance of the impudence of the negroes was narrowly averted more than once.

There were not many negroes in Spartanburg, but a few who had made themselves very obnoxious to the white people and especially to the students. One tall, angular, copper-colored negro came to Spartanburg and claimed to have a diploma from one of the Northern colleges. He was for a time "The Reverend" among the negroes, and he harangued them nightly on social equality and their duty to have and to hold the reins of government. His brazen effrontery was intolerable and the wonder is that he was not shot to death before he left the town.

The man wore good clothes, an elegant silk hat, and twirled a dainty gold-headed cane in his much bejeweled fingers. He was large and strong—this educated negro—had jostled several of the students in his afternoon perambulations, and really seemed to enjoy the sport, apparently

selecting his streets for the purpose of meeting the boys. He had not seen the mountaineer. The fellow's insolence was discussed more than once by groups of indignant college boys. The mountaineer heard of it. He smiled, but said nothing.

One lovely afternoon in April, the mountaineer and two of his classmates strolled down Church Street. They had not gone far before they met the "educated gentleman of color" walking very leisurely, looking as wise as an owl and twirling his gold-headed cane. He walked close to the fence, as was his custom, meaning to force everyone he met to take the outside regardless of the direction he was going. The mountaineer saw his purpose, but knew that he and his companions were entitled to the inside and determined to have it at any cost. So he said to the boys: "Keep quiet and leave him to me." Stepping directly in front of the burly fellow, he seized him by the lapels of his tight-fitting coat and shook him until his silk hat and little cane rolled into the gutter; then giving him a twist and a

kick, he dumped the "educated gentleman of color" into the middle of the street, saying very calmly: "Now, sir, report that if you dare, and we'll tie a rock to your neck and feed you to the fishes in Lawson's Fork." It was never reported, nor was any other white person ever jostled on the streets of Spartanburg by this interloper.



CHAPTER VIII.

“Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant,
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.”

—BURNS.

“Every person has two educations, one
which he receives from others, and one, more
important, which he gives to himself.”

—GIBBON.

THE next vacation was spent, as was the preceding one, in teaching the short-term school and in marketing everything that could be spared from the garden, dairy and poultry yard.

Late in the summer, however, Zach determined to drop out of college for a year and teach school. A ten-month school was offered him, and after considering the matter thoroughly, he decided to take it. He kept up his studies, reviewing carefully all that he had been over at college and doing his level best to teach the mountain urchins as they had never been taught before. By close

economy he saved enough money to defray his expenses the next two years at college.

This year out of college was very helpful to Zach. The careful review of his studies and his efforts to teach Katie Latin and Algebra were of incalculable benefit to him. Many an evening, too, he and Katie spent reading and discussing works of fiction and history.

Though the year was helpful to Zach, it was not without its trials to the mountaineer and his black-eyed beauty. A quaint old divine once said: "There's a lot of human natur in man." There proved to be much "human natur" in these mountain coves. Katie's increasing beauty and brightness excited the envy of her childhood associates and they were not slow in letting her know that she was "gitten too smart fur her raisin'." More than once she was accused of getting "book larnin" and of being "too bigitty fur the company of decent folks whut makes they livin' with ther own han's."

The sun had not long peeped over the eastern horizon, and Mrs. Kelly, having finished her

morning work, had just swept around the front door of her little cabin and seated herself in a splint-bottom chair by the side of the door, when Mrs. Flennigan rode leisurely by on her shambling, double-jointed pony.

“Good mornin’, Miss Flennigan, good mornin’ and how’s all at yo’ house?” inquired Mrs. Kelly in a peculiar screaming voice that found its way into every crack and crevice of the neighboring hills.

“All well, thang God, an’ how’s all wid you-uns?”

“Powerful poorly, powerful poorly, Miss Flennigan: Mose is got a sore toe, Jake sprained his ankle yistidday and Liza’s got a misery in her side this mornin’—but name a gracious, Miss Flennigan, whar you be gwine so soon this fine mornin’?”

“Why I’m gwine to the quiltin’ at Miss Youngbloods—ain’t you-uns be got no invite?”

“Invite? Sakes alive, we-uns aint even ez much ez hearn tell of it. And I be bound that’s the work of that thar Katie Langford, a miser’-

ble, little, bigitty hussy. She didn't want my gals thar to out-shine her, and I be bound 'twar her doin's that kep' Miss Youngblood fum sendin' us the invite."

To fail to get an "invite" to a quilting was a fearful blow to one's pride, and a discount to her social standing beyond reparation in "these parts," and no one could feel a thing of this kind more keenly than Mrs. Kelly and her "gals."

Katie was late reporting at the quilting that day. The conversation between Mrs. Kelly and Mrs. Flennigan was properly seasoned and dished out by the latter dame to those who sat around the quilting frame, due care being taken, of course, to prevent Mrs. Youngblood from hearing it.

"Miss Kelly is about right in her notion of that cretur," said Miss Tarrant, an elderly maiden lady who had no special business of her own, but did not hesitate to attend promptly to that of her neighbors. "Why, bless your life, I wus thar t'other day to see her mammy, and that impident little hussy sot thar the whole

time with a pencil een one han' an' a book een t'other; an' thar she read an' scratched, an' scratched an' read till nigh on to sun down. I told her she'd never make a woman worth any man's time, ef she didn't put them things outen her han's. I told her a broom handle would suit her han's a heap better'n that thar pencil, an' the rattle of a dishpan would do her a sight more good than all she could git outen that book."

"And whut did she say then?" queried Miss Matilda Jones, who had as unselfishly as possible watched Katie's rapid development and Zach's increasing affection for her.

"Whut did she say? Bless your soul, chile, she jess flung that little curl back offen her forehead, an' turned them black eyes o' hern on me, an' she p'inted her forefinger p'int blank at me, she did, an' she said with her voice a tremblin':

'Miss Tarrant, God never made women to sweep and wash dishes all ther days and ef you had improved the talents God gave you,

you might hev made yourself worth some man's time and you wouldn't hev been a long-necked, skinny old maid to-day.' "

"Lor-sa-massy!" exclaimed a chorus of voices. "And did she say that, Miss Tarrant?"

"Course she did and more too; why that gal ain't feear'd of man nor devil. When she said that I jist perlutely told her that I would rither be a old maid with a long neck than to be tied to sich a thing as she was hankerin' arter; for old Big Zach was nothin' but a tub of mush, nohow."

"Gemimy! you did give her a good un," said Mrs. Wampole, after the laughter had subsided. "Did that satisfy the little smarty then?"

"Lordy, no; why she jist up and said: 'Why, Miss Tarrant, Big Zach, as you call him, lights his pipe every mornin' with things better'n you is. Why you looks jist like somebody had tied your neck around a limb and left you thar all summer to dry out; and now ma'm, thar's the door and thar's the road, you kin tek 'em both.' "

"And what did you do?" asked more than one.

"Me? why, I jist tuck 'em both, an' anybody else would a done—"

"Good mornin', Katie, good mornin' honey, you air late this mornin', but come right in, your company is always welcome in this house."

With this warm reception Katie Langford was ushered by Mrs. Youngblood into the presence of the ladies sitting around the quilting frame.

With laughing eyes and cheeks aglow with the rich warm blood that flowed through her veins, the bright young girl whose entrance so unceremoniously checked the conversation around the quilting frame promptly asked pardon for being tardy, and, in a little time, was comfortably seated and rapidly plying her needle.

CHAPTER IX.

“Though losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There’s wit there, you’ll get there,
You’ll find no other where.”—ROBT. BURNS.

KATIE LANGFORD was no ordinary girl. She was thoughtful beyond one of her years. Quick wit and indomitable will power she inherited from “Old Joe,” her father.

Joe Langford, though illiterate, was not an ignoramus. He was a close observer, studied men and things, drew his own conclusions, had the courage of his convictions, but of books he knew nothing. Of the half dozen men in the township who subscribed for the county paper Joe Langford was one, not because he wanted it but because Katie said he must have it.

Joe believed in God, in himself, in his wife, and in Katie, “the smartest gal that uver figgered up a feller’s taxes.” In that home Katie’s wish was law; to that fact was due the weekly visits

of *The Intelligencer*, the leading county paper. Joe believed it was his duty to make a good living, live honestly in the sight of God and man, owe no man anything, say his prayers once a day, and vote for Zeb Vance at every election whether Zeb ran for anything or not. For the paper he cared nothing. "The alminick," he said, "is all I wants, and that's jest to tell me when the moon will git right fur plantin' taters an killin' meat."

But the paper made its regular visits because Katie wanted it, and Joe's pleasure was measured only by that of his daughter. Nor was this the only paper that found its way to that home. The *Saturday Evening Post* was handed to Katie one afternoon by the postmaster, and, after that, came regularly. Not Joe Langford, but another, had introduced that welcome visitor at the home under the elms.

From these two papers the hungry soul of the innocent mountain girl got food and inspiration. She read them over and over again. They became to her a necessity and, though hemmed

in by the mountain peaks 'round about her, her horizon was rapidly widening, and day after day left her in a larger world than she lived in at its beginning.

Katie was spared the temptation to which so many young girls yield nowadays—that of reading too much and developing almost hopeless cases of intellectual dyspepsia. She had but few books and read, re-read, and copied them until they became a part of her very self. Many a night, when the weather was pleasant and her parents asleep, she read for hours by the flickering light of a pine knot; and more than once, at the break of day, was found fast asleep on the floor, her last pine knot having crumbled into ashes on the hearth.

The girl's characteristic frankness forced her to render to the ladies around the quilting-frame her excuse for being tardy. The truth was she had been reading a story in one of her papers in which she became intensely interested, and could not tear herself from it until she had read the last line. This she candidly admitted and, after

the few moments of almost painful silence with which her excuse was received, she proceeded to give her listeners a concise but intelligent outline of the story.

The story grew out of the great Chicago fire of 1871, and as Katie told of the twenty-seven hundred houses burned, the two hundred lives lost and of the two hundred million dollars of property swept away by the great conflagration, it was just a little more than the incredulous ones could stand.

"Lordy," said Mrs. Jones, "whut a lie!"

The girl's face reddened perceptibly, but she bit her lip and went on with the narrative.

"That's nuthin," said a red-haired, barefooted girl of thirteen; "that's nuthin, pap's new ground cotch afire las' week an' burnt ever' bresh-heap an' ever' rail, an' nobuddy's writ 'bout that."

"Shet yo' mouth, 'Lizabeth!" snarled her mother; "whut you know 'bout fires an' sich?"

The woman was in full sympathy with the child's remark, but, knowing from experience

the possibilities of the unruly member, deemed it best to bridle the tongue before it was too late.

Aunt Mary Singletary, an octogenarian, sat near the fireplace, knitting leisurely on a long woolen stocking. She had known the time when she could put as many stitches in a quilt as the "spryest gal een the cove," but that time was gone—her fingers were too old and stiff. The old soul pitied the girl whose extravagance and recklessness had been discussed previous to her arrival, and determined to read her a lecture and, if possible, save her from her waywardness. So, adjusting her brass-rimmed spectacles and scooping from the hearth some hot ashes on the few crumbs of tobacco that lay in the bowl of her cob pipe, she said:

"Katie, my chile, does you b'lieve all that stuff? Don't you know them critters is foolin' uv ye? Is folks gwine ter stan' aroun' an' let that many houses burn bethout puttin' the fire out? An' kin houses be so close together ez to ketch fire one fum t'other? Why hits agin rea-

son. Ef they wuz so close, folks wouldn't hev no place fur the'r gyardin an' chickens an' pigs an' sich. Honey, they air a-foolin' uv ye. An' I hear tell how you air a-gittin' uv a paper jist ez rigilar ez the 'Thursday comes. Is Joe Langford gone clean stark crazy? My chile, you air gittin' ruint. Arter awhile you won't be fittin' fur nuthin'. You can't sew an' spin an' weave an' scour an' cook an' raise chickens, an' milk, an' sich. Don't you know a gal's business is to git married an' raise childurn an' 'tend to her home an' things? Chile, you air sho gittin' sp'iled."

"Aunt Mary" was old and wrinkled and toothless, but her tongue was as nimble as it was seventy years before.

During this tirade needles were dropped and all eyes turned toward "Aunt Mary." Katie tried more than once to reply to her questions, but the old lady, having undertaken her "bounden duty," raised her palsied hand in protest. "The longest lane must have a turning," however; so Mother Singletary stopped

long enough to relight her pipe and get a fresh start.

Katie took advantage of this brief interval and, though she felt the embarrassment of the situation and felt that she was but one "against the field" determined to make the best of the fight. She was strongly tempted once to leave the room, but respect for "Aunt Mary's" great age and sincere motive made her resolve to control her emotions and tongue the best she could and stand her ground.

"Aunt Mary, my father is not crazy," she said, biting her lip and deftly brushing away a tear that moistened her cheek; "he subscribed for that paper because I asked him to do it. I wanted it for my own benefit and pleasure. I do not ask my neighbors to read it—I simply ask to be let alone. If I choose to read and learn something of what the world is doing outside of this cove, it is nobody's business."

"You better be er—"

"Stop now, Miss Nelson, and let me have my say; Aunt Mary has had hers, and I guess she

spoke for the whole crowd," continued the now self-controlled girl.

Blood was now on the moon. The whole crowd seemed to be in fighting humor. Miss Tarrant had a very distinct recollection of a previous "bout" with Katie, and, emboldened by her surroundings, determined to make one final thrust.

"You better be helpin' yo' sickly mammy to wash dishes an' sich, stiddier readin' an primp-in', an' primpin' an' readin'" she hissed, at the same time pushing back her rapidly vanishing "bangs" and passing the snuff-box to Miss Jones.

Katie tried to interrupt her before the sentence was concluded, but in vain. Miss Tarrant was loaded, or thought she was, and that one shot had to be fired. Before the smoke of this discharge had cleared away, several of the less belligerent ones of the party chuckled their indorsement, and Miss Tarrant smiled complacently.

Katie saw now that she had stirred up a hor-

net's nest, and must fight it to a finish or retire ingloriously from the field. Her voice trembled perceptibly, but her strong eyes flashed defiance.

Looking Miss Tarrant full in the face, she said with an earnestness that wilted that dignified spinster:

"Miss Tarrant, you know what I think of you. I need not repeat what I said to you once. I care nothing for your opinion of me, but your effort to make these ladies believe that I neglect my delicate mother is positively mean; no true woman would stoop to such a thing and no good woman could be guilty of it."

Miss Tarrant's embarrassment was painful. She tried to reply, but could not. This time Katie did not propose to be interrupted, and, turning her face to the others, continued:

"I am glad there are ladies here who visit my mother and know that I do not neglect her. They know that I do all the cooking and all the housework. I love my mother and she loves me. I do all the work and nurse her just as well as I can, and she encourages me

to read and study. I wish the people would let me alone."

Then, like the real woman that she was, having won the fight, she wept. Miss Tarrant felt fainty and asked for smelling salts.

"'Truth is truth, an' right is right,'" said Mrs. Simpson, a quiet, motherly old soul, who had said nothing up to this time. "'Truth is truth, an' I must do Katie jestis to say that ever' word she says is born truth. I've been thar off an' on an' menny uv a time, an' hev eat Katie's cookin' and knows hit's good. She kin fry a chicken so hit will mek yo' mouth water, an' batter cakes—she thes nachily beats the cove on them. Miss Langford told me she wus the best chile she ever seed. I wus thar one day and Miss Langford had one o' them turrible headaches. That chile thes sot thar an' rubbed her maw's head till time to git dinner. When Katie went to the kitchen, she tole me how the chile waited on her an' petted her thes lak she wus a baby. She said Katie loved to l'arn her books, an' stiddier hit hurtin' 'er, hit done her

good. Yes, I must say that much fur Katie, fur Miss Langford told me wi' her own lips, an' I've seed enough wi' my own eyes."

The tension was relieved. Katie had won. There was a general dipping of snuff, and most of the ladies addressed themselves anew to the task before them. Some of them went to the water-bucket and Miss Tarrant slipped out through the kitchen into the yard to get a breath of fresh air.

Katie dried her tears, and thanked Mrs. Simpson for coming to her rescue. "I did hope," said she, "that the other girls would get interested in reading. We could get together and have such a good time talking about what we read; and that would be so much better than talking about one another."

"The Lord hev mercy on us ef our gals hes to git l'arnin' an' readin' an' stuff stiddier gittin' married an' raisin' chillun an' sich." This parting shot came from Aunt Mary Singletary, the privileged character, now wreathed in a cloud of smoke which came from her old cob pipe. It

was received with a smile and the subject was dismissed.

That was a long day for Katie. She was treated with the utmost kindness and politeness now, but still there was a lack of ease on the part of several, and this she thought was due to her presence.

When the work was finished and the needles put away, she donned her bonnet—the ever-present “split bonnet”—and, wishing the ladies a very pleasant evening, started toward her home. Mrs. Youngblood and others insisted that she remain for the dance, but she declined, saying that her mother was not feeling well when she left her and that she promised to be back before sundown.

The poor girl had a sad, lonely walk. She was sad, not because of what she had said or done, but because she now fully realized that her efforts to lift herself up were estranging if not embittering some of the dearest friends of her childhood. She did not remain for the dance, not altogether because of her mother's

indisposition, but mainly because she didn't care to. Amusement of that kind did not appeal to her now as it did in the days that were gone. There was a time, and in quite recent years, when Katie Langford was considered the best dancer in the cove and beyond all doubt the belle of the neighborhood, but for that kind of distinction she now had no taste. Then, too, she knew that Zach would not be there. He had told her that he had several pairs of shoes to mend and thought his excuse for absence a valid one. The truth was Katie and Zach were both realizing, for the first time in their lives, perhaps, the "expulsive power of a new affection." Each had new aims and aspirations; old things failed to satisfy.

CHAPTER X.

THE mountaineer was not a genius, but a patient, persistent worker. He had faith in himself and in God. During the next two years he did faithful, effective college work and "walked in his integrity." Lessons were prepared with scrupulous care, and a bull-dog tenacity marked his every effort. Education with him was now a business, an all-absorbing business, and worthy of the best that was in him.

More and more conscious of his shortcomings and feeling more keenly every day his utter lack of early training, Zach determined to lose no opportunity in the lecture room or out of it for increasing his store of information, developing his powers and broadening his horizon. What a determined man with reasonable endowment can accomplish in a given time is sometimes amazing. Some of Zach's friends, in college and out of it, predicted that he would never make his college course. They didn't know the man.

That the college literary society has steadily declined in efficiency during the last thirty years no one who has carefully looked into the subject can deny. Nor is the reason for this hard to find. Conditions have changed. Aims and ideals of young men seeking education are not what they once were. College life, like all other life, is vastly more strenuous. Professors anxious about their own reputations and deeply interested in the thorough equipment of their students for the work of the world after they leave college, demand of them more work and better work than in former times. Indeed, so great is this demand upon the time, energy and strength of the student that he has but little left for literary society work or for anything else.

Then, too, three decades ago, the college orator was the hero of the campus. The highest ambition of the average student was to speak well, and that meant too often only "stately attitudinizing, graceful action, moving and winning appeal to the emotions, and range and power of vocal expression."

The college orator is no longer the hero. The "crack" pitcher, the "dandiest" catcher, the "quickest" short-stop on the diamond, the "heaviest" center-rush and "safest" tackle on the gridiron have dragged him from his pedestal.

When Zach entered college, the literary society was looked upon by educators generally as no unimportant part of the college curriculum. Indeed the work of the society was considered so indispensable that one of the requirements of the trustees was that every student should become a member of it.

Zach joined, not because he desired to become an orator, but because of this requirement, and believed as a matter of course that it would be helpful to him. And so it was. He enjoyed the debate the first evening immensely; picked up bits of valuable information; and wondered at the well-rounded sentences and marvelous flights of eloquence that fell from the seniors' lips. He had never seen or heard the like before. Here for him was a strange, new world.

After two meetings the mountaineer was as-

signed to duty along with other freshmen. He was swept off his feet. Could he do it? Could he speak before those mighty seniors and fearless juniors? He had two weeks in which to get up his speech. With him duty was a sacred word. He would try it. He would do his best.

He did try it. He did do his very best; and succeeded, not in making an eloquent speech, but in convincing himself that a man can do very unpleasant things when impelled by a fixed purpose to shirk no duty but to make the best of every opportunity.

That first effort at public speaking was painful to our hero. His great frame shook as he stood there in the bright light of that glittering chandelier, the first he had ever seen, and he spoke in a stumbling, halting, incoherent way, but he fought it out word by word, piece by piece, until he had said in a way all that he came there to say. Then, with a sigh, he sat down feeling that he had disgraced himself. But the ice was broken.

When the society adjourned a thoughtful,

sympathetic senior took the big freshman by the hand and congratulated him on his first effort. Then he told him of Disraeli's experience, of his promise and of the after life of the great statesman; and, taking him to the library, handed him a book from which he might learn more of the achievements of the eloquent Englishman. The mountaineer was grateful for that timely kindness, and that night long after the lights in other rooms were blown out his was burning brightly—the book before him was a newly-discovered treasure.

By persistent, repeated efforts, Zach overcame his diffidence. He never shirked a duty, but seldom volunteered on debate. His speeches were short, concise and to the point. He never indulged in glittering generalities, but, having studied the subject well, knew what he wanted to say and said it.

He had a keen ear for the ludicrous and sometimes in illustrating a point indulged in humor. His commanding presence, mellifluous voice,

keen sense of humor and terse, epigrammatic sentences never failed to command attention.

One night in the heat of debate Zach straightened himself to his full height, and, raising his chubby hand, said: "Mr. President, Mr. Pope says, 'Whatever is right is right'." This slip of the tongue caused an outburst of applause and laughter. The speaker looked surprised. After the laughter ceased, he added in solemn tones: "And I believe he was right." This brought down the house. Zach finished his speech and sat down. Learning from one of the boys what caused the fun he laughed as heartily as if one of the other members had made the mistake.

The mountaineer got more real benefit from his connection with the society than many others who took a noisier interest in the debates than he did. He was a good listener: weighed arguments well and voted always according to his own convictions as to the relative merits of the arguments produced. For mere sky-scraping effusions he had a contempt; to thoughtful, pointed utterance he gave closest attention. He

once said, "I like to hear a man talk who has something to say; we can get all the gas we want two rooms below"—in the chemical laboratory.

Though he had no desire to become an orator, he "hungered and thirsted" for knowledge from whatever source. In those days, the literary societies had each its own library. Here the mountaineer found what he wanted. Every book was to him a friend speaking truth, and opening up a larger, greater, fuller world. Saturdays he gave to these, and, indeed, most of the other time he could spare from his text books. He was fond of poetry, but found greatest pleasure in history and biography. Franklin's autobiography was one of the first he read, and to this one book he did not hesitate to declare he was indebted for much of the inspiration that carried him through his college course.

The Vicar of Wakefield was an eye-opener to the mountaineer and Scott's *Ivanhoe* a delight, but Cooper's novels had for him a fascination and a charm unequaled by any others. "These," said he, "stir my blood and sometimes tempt me

to neglect my text-books. O, I wish I had time just to read, read, read. How many years of my life I have wasted!" And then with a sigh, "But I didn't know."

The thoughtful fellow realized that while fiction had a peculiar charm for him, biography and history contained what he most needed. To these he gave the preference, and instead of worrying over hours that were wasted, determined to waste no more.

The mountaineer was fond of a good joke and could tell a story well. He liked innocent amusement, too, and never hesitated to indulge whenever time and opportunity permitted; but there was one thing his fellows could never induce him to do: he would not take "laughing gas." Once a year Prof. Warren DuPre, the chemist, administered this gas to any of the students that desired to take it. That was always a great time with the whole student body, and, not infrequently, numbers of people from the city came over to the campus to witness the antics of the boys while under its influence.

All knew that the effect produced by the gas depended largely upon the disposition and temperament of the subject. Some made speeches; some sang and danced; others wanted to fight, and still others wanted to hug everybody in sight. All were curious to see what the big boy from the mountains would do. But in spite of their entreaties, Zach persistently declined to take the gas, declaring that he did not need anything to help him make a fool of himself. "I do not want anything," he said, "that will make me more ridiculous in the sight of other people than I am ordinarily."

During two years of the mountaineer's college course, there was one other large man among the students: "Big Eck" the boys called him—sometimes, the "Baby." When Zack was sophomore, "Big Eck" was senior. The two tipped the scales at about the same notch. Both were handsome, muscular, agile. The "Baby" had a classic face, was scholarly and dignified.

As to which of the two—the South Carolinian or the Tarheel—was the stronger, opinion among

the boys was divided. Each, of course, had his champions, though neither of the big boys cared a straw to solve the problem. Their ambitions lay in other directions.

In those days there were ten minutes between the bells calling the students to recitations. When the weather was good the classes generally assembled in front of the college building to await the ringing of the second bell.

One fine day it happened that Zach and the "Baby" were there among the others. A wrestling match between the two giants was proposed by a mischievous freshman who cared as much for personal prowess as he did for mastering the Euclid or Xenophon. The big boys declined at first, then hesitated, and finally yielded to the entreaties of the crowd. Coats and vests were thrown off and the smiling sophomore and the dignified senior were walking into the ring when Prof. DuPre walked around the corner of the building. Ascertaining what was up, the Professor smilingly said, "Gentlemen, I am fond of sport and like to see young men of average size

test their strength by wrestling, but really I think it would be hazarding too much for you two men to engage in a wrestling match. You are both very large and very strong. One or both of you might get badly hurt. You are risking too much for the amusement you would give these boys. I beg you not to do it."

That was enough. The big-hearted Professor tipped his hat and walked on to his class-room. Every boy in that crowd loved Prof. DuPre and knew that he was right. The match was called off. Though all yielded as gracefully as possible, considering their eagerness for the fray and boyish indifference to consequences, many were badly disappointed.

Thwarted in their efforts to test the mountaineer's strength, they were more and more determined to gratify their curiosity if possible. One of the smallest members of his class amused himself and the others frequently by having Zach hold him out on his strong right arm. Still this did not satisfy the boys—those big, knotty muscles must be tested. Somebody must

put that broad back on the ground if possible. No one man but the "Baby" need try it. That was conceded, but, for that match there was no chance, for the big fellows, out of deference for the Professor's wishes, had positively declined to wrestle.

Finally, one afternoon, two students bantered the mountaineer for a wrestle—two against one. They were both grown, a little below the average size, but well-built and as active and sinewy as Texas ponies. The challenge was accepted. The two were to tackle as they pleased and Zach to defend himself as best he could. It was a battle royal,—this between the two ball players and the mountain wood-chopper. Students were as wild with excitement as they now get over a foot-ball game, and tumbled over one another to see how the struggle would terminate. Many times Zach was clear of the ground, the two boys lifting him up bodily, but invariably when he came down one of the others was underneath him. The contest lasted many minutes, the two boys hoping to tire the big fellow out. In this

they were mistaken. Zach had felled too many trees, had done too many hard days' work to be "winded" by a little tussle like that. The two boys, soiled with perspiration and dirt, gave it up; all had a hearty laugh, and Zach walked off to his room whistling as merrily as if returning from a corn shucking, or an evening's frolic with the young people in a mountain home. The question, Who is the stronger, the mountaineer or the "Baby" is to this day an unsolved problem.

CHAPTER XI.

“And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart and prospered.”

—2 Chron. xxxi, 21.

THOUGH Zach's religion was of a decided type he did not proclaim it from the house tops. Though modest and unassuming, he was none the less positive and uncompromising when it came to a question of right and wrong. In those days there was no young men's christian association in college, but our hero was a regular attendant at the Wednesday afternoon prayer-meeting. He was never ashamed of the banner under which he served, but never flaunted it in the faces of his fellow-students.

Anxious for every possible agency and every moment of time to contribute to the enlargement of his life and the deepening of his sympathies, the mountainer attended regularly the Baptist Sunday-school during the college sessions. And

these Sunday lessons he found as helpful to him as any he learned during the other six days of the week. There was no more intensely earnest pupil in that school. There many a door was unlocked for him and many a treasure revealed that gave a new charm to life and made every effort to develop his faculties worth while.

Zach was comparatively illiterate, but by no means wholly unlearned. Up to the time he entered college his one book had been the Bible, and no man who knew that wonderful book as he knew it could be called ignorant. His mother and his Bible had been his constant companions. From the one he learned daily lessons of truth and purity; from the other—that great literature in prose and poetry—he got the highest ideals of human character. Truth was his guiding star; right, the determining factor in every question.

Though watchful of every possible means of self-improvement, Zach was not self-centered. He did not allow selfness to degenerate into selfishness. He realized that a larger life and

greater opportunities brought with them greater responsibilities. His sympathies were ever with the people among whom he was born and reared. He knew them and loved them. He loved the rugged manhood of the men and the simple purity of the women, and longed to contribute in some way to their social and intellectual uplift.

In that admirable little book, "School, College and Character," Mr. Briggs, of Harvard, says: "From his studies he [the student] gets more or less culture, but no backbone; from his foot-ball he gets the stuff and substance of his education. The business man often prefers in his office a successful college athlete to a successful college scholar; for the athlete, as the business man says, 'has done something.' "

Our mountaineer was not a college athlete—he had no time now for that kind of training which under different circumstances would have been most pleasing to him. That side of one's education had in his case, however, been the only one not neglected. Before he knew what

a college was, his life-long training in the university of hard work and hard knocks had fully developed his physical strength and, at the same time, fostered great will power and had crystalized into the habit of self-reliance. In short, he had long ago learned how to "do things" by doing them.

If there was one thing the mountaineer knew better than any other it was the temper of his own people. He knew full well they would brook nothing that smacked of pedantry. If he would lift them to a higher plane of thinking and living, it must be done in the plainest, simplest, most natural manner. He would not preach them a gospel of "dont's"—of that they had quite enough in the prohibitory laws of the land. He would show them "the better way" by leading them into the light.

As a rule, the hardest people to move, and sometimes the most dangerous when aroused, are those who are contented with their condition because of total ignorance of their possibilities. Zach knew this. "My people can not be

driven," said he, "but, by one who gives them real sympathy and genuine interest, they can be led into anything good or bad. I believe they have faith in my integrity; and, if what little I have learned is worth anything, I shall invest it with all my soul in their betterment."

That promise Zach made to himself one day during his third year at college. So, during the first weeks of the following vacation, he organized a Sunday-school in the little log house in which he taught the children during the week. Out of his own savings he purchased a dozen copies of an inexpensive song book. These he put into the hands of his pupils and himself taught them to sing a number of the brightest selections. The little ones sang them with a will and enjoyed the exercise immensely.

So when the teacher invited all who cared to do so to meet him at the schoolhouse the next Sunday at 4 o'clock, for the purpose of organizing a Sunday-school that they might learn other songs and study the Bible, there was general rejoicing. "Bring your Ma and Pa, too,"

said the teacher, "bring all the family if they will come."

"Fetch Tige, too?" asked a tow-headed urchin who looked upon Tige, his dog, as by no means the least important member of his family.

"No, you needn't fetch Tige," was the reply, "but bring all the children."

Edgar was there, and so was Tige and every other member of Edgar's family; and every member of many other families.

And Tige was not the only canine present. Sam Crawford's Bull, a vicious-looking, crop-eared cur, was there and did not hesitate to make the fact known. Bull seemed to realize that the little house was crowded and proceeded to drive Tige out. Tige questioned his authority and then and there they undertook to settle the question.

Led by the teacher the children were singing, if not melodiously, still very vigorously, while parents looked on with unmistakable delight. Very little attention would have been paid to the fighting of the dogs but for the danger of their

biting some of the children in their blind rage. So, seizing Tige by the hind legs, Bill Sanders said to Jim Pruitt, "Ketch Bull by the tail, Jim, and fling him outen the do'!" Jim grabbed Bull as directed and one dog was thrown out of one door and one out of the other.

The song was not disturbed by the fight, the teacher having the good sense to rivet the attention of the children by beginning to "beat time" with his hands and to sing more lustily than before. He left the settlement of the unexpected episode to the judgment of the sturdy mountaineers nearest the contending brutes.

Zach had no trouble in organizing the school. He soon found that he himself would have to act as superintendent, teacher, leader of singing, secretary—everything. But he was delighted with the spirit manifested by the children and their parents, and regretted that he had not made the attempt long before. The next Sunday the crowd was so large the backless benches were moved out into the yard and the exercises held under the shade of the trees.

The teacher had learned many great truths at Spartanburg, both in college and in Sunday-school. These he determined to pour into the hearts and consciences of his interested countrymen. The Bible was the text-book, but of these there were not over-many in the school. The number was supplemented by the use of the orthodox, never-failing Blue-back speller. There were many children in the Sunday-school who could not read—who did not attend the day-school. Zach saw his opportunity and took advantage of it. These little ones could be taught the letters and taught to read here in the Sunday-school. In this two good women rendered valuable assistance. The adults were thrown into one large class and of this the teacher took charge himself.

A regular lesson was assigned for the following Sunday—one chapter from the Old Testament and one from the New. All were urged to read them and study them during the week. At the Sunday-school the class studied together under the direction of the teacher.

Zach believed this a door providentially opened and walked into it like the real man that he was. With him it was a labor of love, a matter of conscience, and he gave himself to it without any kind of reservation whatever. His short, pointed lectures to the whole school were particularly instructive and helpful; and were delivered in no patronizing way, but always so as to make the simple-hearted hearers feel, "he is one of us." They trusted him and followed him because they loved him. They loved him because they believed that his was a labor of love—that, and that only.

"I thes b'lieves he's a sho-nuff Christian," said Charlie Goudlock to his friends and neighbors, as a group of them wended their way over the hills toward their homes one Sunday afternoon, "I b'lieves he's geni*wine*."

"Yes, yes," responded a fat little round-faced woman who was puffing and blowing under the burden of her three-year-old boy who sat gleefully astride his mother's right hip, swinging with one hand to her shoulder while with the

other, in which he held a whip made of hickory bark, he struck at everything in general and his mother's dress-skirt in particular. "Yes, yes; I wus sho tuck back an' hed a powerful misery 'round my liver whenst he telled us 'bout thet po' little boy whut hed a coat o' seventeen colors—thet little feller the painters [panthers] eat; you know his mean brothers flung him to the beastis."

"Lordy, 'Liza Jane," said another, taking her pipe from her lips, "he nuver said seventeen colors, he said lots uv 'em, mebbe two hundred; I know hit war a powerful sight, an' I gut to thinkin' 'bout my little Jeems whut I made a coat fur las' week an' dyed it ouden pokeberries an' sich. I thes couldn't he'p thinkin' whut ef the beastis een these mountings would git my Jeems."

"Shet yo' mouth, Prissy; don't you know the beastis ain't a-gwine to git Jeems? that chap air too sry," said her husband. "'Sides, Zach nuver said the painters eat that yuther boy; he 'lowed

he wus butted to death by a dinged billy goat. That's whut kilt him."

"That's right, Jerry," said a neighbor walking at his heels, "that's right, the painters didn't git him, fur the chap run into a pit (that's a hole een the mounting) fur to dodge 'em, an' whenst he went een a billy goat butted him to death."

"Gollies, pap," said his son, "that hain't right—Zach 'lowed his mean brothers flung 'im een a sink-hole an' when he drapped een he bruk his neck. They put him een thar to keep 'im frum tellin' the'r pap 'bout some o' the'r devilment. Whenst the chap bruk his neck, then them fellers hed to lie outen it. One tole the ole man the painters eat the chile an' 'nother said 'twas a lie; said a goat kilt him."

"Well, I don't onderstand it," said the little fat woman; "I don't onderstand it 'pears like, but I thes mus' b'lieve thar wus some ill doin s long-a that thar chile—I thes bet them wus moonshiners an' wanted to git that po' chile

outen the way; that's whut made 'em drap 'im een that hole."

Unable to agree as to the exact statement made by the teacher concerning the boy with the coat of many colors, it was finally agreed to ask for a restatement of facts the following Sunday. Then, separating, they went to their several homes, singing the songs they had heard at the Sunday-school and looking at the stars with a new interest as they came out one by one while the daylight mellowed into darkness.

The good work Zach was doing in the Sunday-school and in the day-school was much discussed, even beyond the boundary lines of his own township. He appreciated the kind words that were spoken to him and was encouraged by them, but knew that here and there were some persons who doubted the sincerity of his motive and questioned the wisdom of his course.

Late one afternoon he met "Uncle Jeems" Cooley, a Primitive Baptist preacher. "Uncle Jeems" lived in an adjoining township and had

a small flock there to whom he preached—they were known as “Hardshells.” He was a good old man, ignorant and narrow, of course, but had the respect of the community. He visited the sick and buried the dead, and had done so for years. Indeed, the old man felt that he, more than any other, was responsible for the spiritual condition of the people, not only in his township but in the neighboring ones, and felt that Zach’s work in organizing a Sunday-school was unwarrantable. Having made up his mind to see Zach and have a talk with him, he was glad of this chance meeting.

“I’m pow’ful glad to see ye, Zachie, pow’ful glad to put these ole peepers on ye ag’in—how you wuz, my son?” said the old gentleman, giving the mountaineer a hearty handshake.

“Thank you, ‘Uncle Jeems,’ I am delighted to see you, I assure you—I haven’t had that pleasure in a long time. How are you feeling to-day?” And these words were spoken very cordially by the younger of the two men.

“Very well, Zachie, very well, ‘cep’in’ I b’en

pow'ful bruk up 'bout this here foolish notion o' yourn."

The mountaineer smiled respectfully. He knew what the old man was referring to, but had too much respect for his gray locks to let the preacher know that he pitied him.

"You looks lak your daddy a power, Zachie, a power lak 'im," continued "Uncle Jeems," "an' I did hope you would settle down an' git married an' be a useful citizen lak the Cap'ain. But they tells me you air crazy. They tells me you air stirrin' up the devil 'mongst the folks. They tells me you hev started a Sunday-school an' is tryin' to teach the Bible: now don't you know that will onbridle the devil over on your side thar?"

"I don't think so, 'Uncle Jeems'; I think we will drive the devil out after awhile. I know the people are enjoying the Sunday-school and I think they are being benefited by it."

"You air mistaken, Zachie; you air only on-loosin' the devil. You will mek the people on-res'less an' dissatisfied. I don't b'lieve een your

Sunday-schools an' missions an' temperance an' sich. You can't teach the folks nuthin'—they mus' be led by the sperrit."

Seeing the mountaineer chewing something, the old man said: "Gi' me a chaw o' tobacky Zachie; I guess that mus' be the pure manufac—jest let me taste a bite, will ye?"

Zach assured him that he was chewing only a piece of hickory bark and never chewed tobacco.

The preacher looked disappointed. "I guess you larnt that down yander een the flat, at the college thar, didn't ye?" he said. "An mebbe that's whar ye larnt how to run a Sunday-school an' not drink liquor an' sich. I knowed hit would come to this when I heeard you wuz gone down thar. I knowed them heathens would sp'ile ye."

The mountaineer had no disposition to discuss matters with the old man. He pitied him and was sorry for the people in the way of whose progress the old fellow was a decided obstacle. He was glad, moreover, that it was growing late and, expressing pleasure afforded him by the

accidental meeting, he handed the old gentleman his hand.

“Uncle Jeems” returned the hearty handshake and said with no little earnestness: “Zachie, come over some time an’ spend the night wi’ me. Come over. Me an’ you kin jest set thar an, discuss things till eight o’clock, late bedtime, then arter me an’ the ole ’oman is gone to bed’ you an the gals kin chin it ontell the rooster crows fur day so fur ez I’m a-keerin’. An’ them’s pow’ful likely gals, my son, pow’ful likely. Thar’s Mag an’ Esther an’ Ruth. The ole ’oman says Ruth’s the bes’ lookin’, but I bets on Mag—that’s Magdalene—we calls her Mag fur short. Yas, sir, I bets on Mag. Why that gal kin chop ez much wood ez any man een the cove; an’ she kin stan’ flat-footed een her stockin’s an’ lift her own weight o’ corn; she kin jump a ten rail fence clean light an’ crack ’er heels together three times afore she hits the groun’. I tell ye, that air a pow’ful gal—kim over.”

Still more the mountaineer pitied the old man

and the more was sorry for the daughters who called him father. He thanked him, of course, for the cordial invitation, and, turning his face homeward, noticed that the sun had sunk behind the hills.

Zach was saddened rather than amused at what he had heard, but consoled himself by the reflection that, in the order of nature, the old man couldn't remain many more years the veritable stumbling block of the community in which he lived.

He had not gone far when he met a messenger riding "under whip and spur." One of his pupils, a bright little fellow, had been thrown by a mule an hour before and was thought to be dying.

"Come quick, Mr. Zach," said the young man, "come quick. Johnnie's been callin' fur ye with uver' breath, an' maw's pow'ful bruk up 'bout it; she says fur God's sake come ez quick ez ye kin. Jis' ride Beck an' I'll walk," and he slid off the withers of his iron-gray mule.

The mountaineer threw his heavy leg across

the back of the little mule and, pressing his heels against her throbbing sides, was the next second racing toward the home of Edgar Kirby. It was only a mile down Chestnut Ridge, and in a few minutes Zach was standing by the bed of the dying child. The mother was wild with grief, a half dozen neighbors were sobbing in sympathy around the bed on which the little fellow lay. The child was as pale as death and his eyes were closed, but Zach soon saw that he was still alive. Ascertaining the nature of the injuries, the teacher knew that they were fatal and that it was a matter of only a few minutes with the little sufferer.

Feeling his pulse and gently stroking the thin, pale hand of the child, the sympathetic teacher said :

“Johnnie, do you know me?”

“Yas, sir,” was the scarcely audible response, the child smiling faintly and opening his eyes for a second.

“Will you say after me the words that I say, Johnnie?”

"Yas, sir."

"Our Father."

"Our Father."

"Have mercy on me."

"Have mercy on me."

"And save my soul in Heaven."

"And save my soul in Heaven."

"For Jesus' sake."

"For Jesus' sake."

"Amen."

"Amen."

The dying child looked once more into the eyes of his teacher, and, with an effort, said :

"He'll save me, Mr. Zach. I axed him to save me. I told him whut you said 'bout him at school. Here he is now."

A smile played over the little fellow's face and—he was dead.

That was an ungodly house, but the simple story of Jesus and His love, told so often at school, led the dying child to the foot of the cross.

CHAPTER XII.

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan often loses both itself and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.”

—SHAKESPEARE.

Now, again, Zach left college for a year to replenish his depleted purse. And it was during this “off year” that he had his severest trials.

Whatever may be said of the inhabitants of the mountain regions of North Carolina, and however amusing their vernacular may sound at times to the cultured ear, of one thing the reader may be sure: they are not all fools.

They saw that Zach, their own neighbor, a mountain boy born and reared among them, was not the same rough young man that left them to go to college a few years before. They knew,—the most ignorant of them could see,—that he was a broader, deeper, stronger man; a man becoming daily fuller of sympathy and love and better fitted for being something and doing some-

thing in life. This, "all hands" admitted, but for that very thing, some people despised him. Verily, human nature is a strange thing. But Zach had his friends, staunch friends, men and women, who believe in helping the young man who helps himself.

Beaver Dam Spring was a famous meeting place. Three quarters of a century ago the mountaineers met there to hear Fourth of July orations, to take part in "gander-pullings" to engage in target-shooting, to fill up on the purest of "mountain-dew" and to settle old disputes by stripping to the waist, entering a ring and fighting it out "fist and skull."

In the 70's, political campaign meetings were held at this famous gathering place, and picnic parties assembled there, but "gander-pullings" were no longer indulged in, human nature itself at last revolting against the cruelty of the sport.

When Zach announced on Tuesday that the school should have the next day as holiday on account of the campaign meeting at "Beaver

Dam," there was general rejoicing, particularly on the part of the larger boys.

Wednesday was an ideal day, and many hundreds of mountaineers of both sexes took advantage of it to go to Beaver Dam and see the folks and hear the news. It was a good-natured crowd; candidates were numerous and industrious, and after a few hours political excitement ran high.

There were no issues among the candidates for the House of Representatives, so each candidate tried to win votes by being as pleasant as he could and saying the things the least objectionable.

Zach, "The Perfesser," was a patient listener to everything that was said,—the wise and the unwise alike.

Things went well until the last speaker, Zeb Vance Watts, concluded his speech. In the course of his remarks, he said:

"Fellow citizens, as grand and glorious as our country is in her history and in her traditions, she would be infinitely grander and more glori-

ous but for the contemptible fanaticism of some of her citizens. Our liberties have been taken from us one by one till after a while we shall be shorn of all our glory and strength, and become a pauper band with no will of our own and no power to execute it if we had it. Our fathers made their corn into liquor and drank and sold it at their pleasure. Now, you dare not do it for fear of being shot down like dogs by Northern scoundrels called revenue officers. I believe that every man has the God-given right, and ought to have the legal right, to make every grain of his corn into liquor, if he sees fit, and sell it wherever he pleases."

More than one revenue officer had "bit the dust" in the neighborhood of Beaver Dam, and this play upon the prejudices of the auditors brought forth round after round of applause.

"Go it Watts, by gosh, I'll vote fur ye," cried a soggy moonshiner leaning against a tree hard by.

Encouraged by this enthusiastic applause, Watts, the young barrister, threw his head and

shoulders back, and, raising his voice till it penetrated many of the mountain fastnesses continued, "No, fellow citizens, this infernal revenue law, put upon us by white-livered Yankees, is a curse to our civilization. The blood of some of your own fathers and sons, shot down in cold blood by these revenue officers, cries out to you for vengeance."

Here the voice of the speaker was drowned by the thunderous applause, and he concluded it was a good time to take his seat. The applause at last subsiding, several enthusiastic admirers cried out: "We'll send you, old boy. Hurrah for Watts!"

Zeb Vance Watts felt that he had covered himself with glory, and took his seat with an air that said: "I have captured the whole crowd."

Not so. Scarcely had the last echo of the tumultuous applause died away down the valley, when a large, handsome man stepped upon the platform and asked permission of the chairman to make a few remarks. He was recognized at once as "Zach, the Perfesser," and more than

one said: "Hush, thar's Zach; he's gwine to speak."

"That's right, Zach, talk it out!" exclaimed a half score of voices.

The mountaineer, standing erect and with the muscles of his face twitching slightly, said in a strong, clear voice that rang out over that immense crowd:

"My friends, I am no stranger to you. Born and reared among you, we have breathed the same fresh air, imbibed the same independent spirit and loved the same mountain scenery. You are my people and I belong to the people of Beaver Dam Cove; for that reason I claim the right to speak very plainly to you today."

"Hurrah for Zach! Tell it to us, Zach; tell it to us!"

"I should not have opened my mouth, but for the speech made by Zebulon Vance Watts, Esq. Hearing that, I could not hold my peace without doing violence to my conscience, nor could I have kept silent and been true to your interests, or true to myself.

"By that speech the gentleman brings reproach upon the name of one of North Carolina's most distinguished citizens. The Hon. Zebulon Vance would not own his namesake today, if he could hear such utterances fall from his lips.

"I pity the man who, having learned a few things from books, concludes that all other people less favored than himself are soft-headed fools who may be led around by the nose by such a two-by-four lawyer as the Hon. Zebulon Vance Watts."

"Hurrah for our Zach!" "Tell it to him, Zach!"

"The gentleman convicts himself of inexcusable ignorance, or he attempts to play upon your passions and prejudices as if you were a set of ignoramuses. Let him take either horn of the dilemma. In the one case, he shows himself a fool; in the other, a knave."

Springing to his feet, Watts advanced a few steps toward the speaker and said in an excited way:

"Do you mean to question my veracity, sir?"

Turning his eyes full upon the barrister and pointing his finger directly at him, Zach said in a calm, penetrating voice:

"I mean to prove to this audience, sir, that you are either a fool or a knave; sit down and take your medicine like a man."

"Hurrah for Watts!" "Hurrah for Watts!" screamed his admirers. "Knock him off the stand, Watts; pull his nose!"

Watts was not without his friends, by any means, nor was he a boy himself, balancing the scales as he did at 220. But Zach's fighting blood was stirred, and never was the sarcasm of Wendell Phillips more withering than the defiant manner of this son of the mountains.

Watts took his seat, incurring thereby the displeasure of his half-drunk henchmen.

"This man has talked to you very glibly of how things used to be," continued the mountaineer. "He tells you that there was a time when our fathers made and sold whiskey as freely as they drank in this mountain air. He might have told you there was a time when our

fathers burnt witches at the stake—but do we do that now? He might have told you there was a time in the not distant past when our fathers just over there by that spring engaged in the fearful sport of gander-pulling—do we do that now? He might have told you there was a time when just over the hill there our fathers gambled for beef and mutton by shooting at a target—do we do it now? No, indeed. But why were these things not kept up? The times change and we change with them. As the years go by men become wiser and better, and we who live in the blazing light of the latter part of the 19th century cannot approve of many things our fathers did. We honor their memories, emulate their virtues, but we do not propose to repeat their mistakes.

“The manner in which you vote will test, not only your own patriotism, but your intelligence. We don’t boast of much culture in Beaver Dam Cove, but God knows that our men are just as brave and just as patriotic as ever donned the blue or the gray, and our women are just as pure

as the 'icicles that hang on Dian's temple.' I see among you men who followed Lee and Jackson with unfaltering tread. You have no apology for what you did, but when the sun of the Southern Confederacy was set, you laid down your arms and swore allegiance to the flag of our common country. I knew but little of my brave father who sleeps in a soldier's grave in Virginia, but I believe if he were here today he would denounce the sentiment of the gentleman who seeks your votes by an attempt to arouse your prejudices and keep up the bitter feelings existing between the two sections of our great country."

"Hurrah for Jim Whetstone! Hurrah for our Captain!"

This allusion to Captain Jim Whetstone was more than the old soldiers could stand. No more recklessly brave man than Jim Whetstone ever followed Wade Hampton to battle. This outburst of tumultuous applause was a voluntary tribute to the memory of the brave Confederate, and the honest, simple-minded veterans that looked into the face of the speaker before them

knew that he was the "worthy son of a worthy sire," and that he would fight for truth and right and sobriety with just as dauntless courage as was ever displayed by the gallant Captain on the bloodiest battle-field.

But Zach's courage was to be tested.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Strength, and the consciousness of strength, in a right-hearted man, imparts a nobleness to his character; but he will be ~~most~~ careful how he uses it; for
‘It is excellent
To have a giant’s strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.’ ”—SAMUEL SMILES.

AFTER so completely routing Zebulon Vance Watts at the campaign meeting, Zach was the hero of Beaver Dam Cove. Old men who had known and loved his father predicted for the young “Perfesser” a great future. They could see the fearlessness of the father in the son, and could conceive of no higher type of manhood. Old ladies were enthusiastic in their praises of the young man, and the girls looked askance at Katie Langford; while the young men were divided into two groups—the one admiring, the other despising the companion of their boyhood days who had grown away from them—above them—since the day he first entered college.

In the old days every county in North Carolina had its "bully;" and in some counties that dignity has not yet "passed." His proud distinction is to be able to throw down and "lick" every other man in his county. In the early 70's Mike Dixon was the bully of Rutherford County.

Joel Samiter was a country dude. He was rather slender, had the countenance of a fox, wore a red cravat, a "biled shirt," parted his hair in the middle, and tugged constantly at a wee bit of a moustache that vainly struggled for existence. He kept a little country store, too—this man Samiter—and sold "manifac" tobacco, real "manifac," a few Virginia cheroots, and an occasional hank of yarn to some good housewife who needed it in weaving her winter's supply of cloth. He was not accused of selling whisky, but it was noticed that the moonshiners of the Cove were fond of gathering at his place of business.

Samiter was a great ladies' man, called himself "the smasher," and dangled more than one mountain lassie's scalp at his belt. He was a political heeler, too; was a bitter, scheming partisan, and was courted and flattered by local politicians.

Being an ardent admirer of Zebulon Vance Watts, Samiter felt chagrined by the drubbing given that gentleman by the "Perfesser" at the campaign meeting, and swore by all that was good and bad to humiliate the teacher.

But Watts' defeat was not the only grudge Samiter had against Zach: Katie Langford had snubbed "the smasher" the Sunday before, and now the "Perfesser" must be humiliated.

"Now I've got it, by gosh!" said Joel Samiter to himself one afternoon, after sitting for a long time in a brown study. "Now I've got it, and I'll have my revenge."

Without further soliloquy Samiter saddled his horse and rode five miles to Bill Cartlet's.

The sun was just setting behind the hills when Cartlet, with his axe on his shoulder, crossed the road just in front of his cabin.

"Hello, Bill, ole fellow, how you wuz? Whar you bin down dar wid dat axe on your shoulder, pertendin' like you pow'ful industr'ous?"

Samiter was not a native of the Cove, or of the county, and had enjoyed considerably better edu-

cational advantages than his friends and patrons, but he was a good judge of human nature, and could drop into the vernacular of Beaver Dam with the greatest possible ease.

“Hello, yo’self, Joel; I’m doin’ toler’ble ’cepin’ I’m monst’us tired,” drolled out Bill Cartlet, at the same time biting off a fresh chew from his twist of home-raised tobacco.

“Whut you bin doin’ wid dat axe, Bill?”

“Jist a choppin’ down some dead trees over thar in de new groun’ I cleared las’ year.”

“Dat’s so; I heeard you wus a-gwine ter have a log-rollin’ soon; is dat right?”

“Yes, dat’s right; I wus jist a thinking ’bout p’intin’ nex’ Wednesday week and axin’ the boys to come in and gi’ me a lift.”

“Now, Billy, old boy, dat’s jis whut I come to see you ’bout,” said Joel in his sweetest tones, dismounting the while from his frisky pony. “I heeard you wuz gwine to have a rollin’, and I jis come over to chat you ’bout it, bein’s I knowed you speck’in’ ter invite me, you an’ me bein’ sich good friends. You see, Billy, I want

you to have the log-rollin' on Sadday stiddier Wednesday."

"And whut fur?" said Cartlet.

"Cause, you see—well, Billy—well, I'll jist have ter let you in ter de secret. You an' me is good friends an' I know you'll stand. I've got a plan."

"Well, whut is it?"

"Set down here on this log an' I'll tell ye. You know, you an' me an' some the yuther boys wus powerful tuck back t'other day when Zach chawed up Zeb Watts jes lak he did. Dat all-fired speech wus the thing whut beat Watts in the 'lection. Sho as Betsy's my gal, dat done the work, and I want ter git even wid Zach. Nuther thing: that gal er hisern, dat stuck up Katie Langford, gi' me de cole shoulder las' Sunday, and I want ter make her feel bad. So I want you to have your rollin' on Sadday an' invite the teacher."

"Well, how de devil is dat goin' ter git even wid him, or mek the little gal feel bad?"

"Now look er here, Bill, this betwixt me an'

you, an' ter go no funder. You invite Mike Dixon and I'm goin to hire Mike to pick a fuss wid de Perfesser and lick him, by gosh! How's that?"

"Dat'll do very well," drolled Cartlet, squirting the yellow spittle through his fingers. "Dat'll do very well, providin' Mike kin lick him."

"Lick him! My gosh, man, isn't Dixon the bully of the Cove?" asked Joel, excitedly, losing for the time the vernacular of the neighborhood.

"Yes, but he ain't never tackled Zach Whetstone. Joel, did you see Zach's eyes when he spoke at the meetin'? Now I don't know everything, but I knows some things. That man will fight, an' he's a powerful man. They tell me he jist lak his daddy, and the old soldiers say the old Captain was a tiger in a fight. They say he never let up, but jist shot his eyes and hilt on till the other fellow hollowed, 'calf-rope'."

"Dat makes no diffunce," said Joel. "You ax Mike Dixon, an' he'll sho make Zach tote his cotton."

"O, I'll ax him; certainny, I'll ax him," said

Cartlet. "I'll ax him, beca'se I don't object to seein' a little wool-pullin' myself."

"Alright, Bill, alright, old fellow. And you'll p'int Sadday week as the day."

"Yes; Sadday week."

"Good boy! good night, Billy!" and Joel flung himself into his saddle, and giving free rein to the restless Mustang, galloped over the hill, dreaming of his own revenge and Zach's humiliation.

CHAPTER XIV.

SATURDAY week dawned clear and bright. About thirty neighbors gathered early to help Bill Cartlet roll his logs. Zach, the "Perfesser" was among them, for though within one year of graduation and now regarded the best educated man in the cove, he was not above lending a helping hand to a neighbor as he had done from his youth up.

At that time, in that region, the "corn-shucking" and the "log-rolling" were to the men what the "quilting" was to the women. From a business point of view, these gatherings were beneficial to individuals, and socially were very helpful to all concerned.

At the "log-rollings," many a test of strength was made, for pulling at the "hand-stick" was the favorite method of measuring one's muscles. To be able to pull one's mate to his knees while lifting a heavy log was *prima facie* evidence of superior physical strength. In those days before

the railroads had penetrated the mountain regions, carrying with them the saw-mill, lumber was "no object," to express it in the language of the mountaineer; and when a clearing was made, the only thing that could be done with the timber was to pile the logs into great heaps and burn them.

When men entered the field to pile these logs, they were paired generally according to size. So at Cartlet's log-rolling, by common consent, Zach was paired with Mike Dixon, the "bully." It was a pair of powerful men. Dixon was a few pounds heavier, but both were muscular and agile as cats.

Many a heavy log yielded to the touch of the two giants, and in a few hours, the well-matched pair became objects of special interest to the entire crowd. At one time, the teacher succeeded in putting one knee of the Irishman on the ground. Mike claimed that he was fouled, but in the judgment of the witnesses, it was fairly done and was so declared. There was nothing for Mike to do but accept their judgment. He

yielded, but uttered one or two bitter oaths and leaned to his hand-stick again.

The contest was now exciting. Men left their own log-heaps to come and watch the two big fellows.

Joel Samiter was greatly excited and offered to bet his horse against the "mangiest calf in the cove" that the Irishman would pull the teacher down before night.

"I'll take that bet," said Uncle Joe Morrow, a very old man who came, not to assist in the work, but just to watch the young men exhibit their strength. "I'll take that bet, young man. You'll never see it done."

"Look out thar, you scoundrel, and keep off my toe!" It was Mike Dixon who spoke, and he was looking into the eyes of his mate, the teacher, who stood just beyond the log at the other end of his hand-stick.

"I beg your pardon," said Zach calmly. "I didn't mean to step on your toe, of course."

"You are a —— liar," said the Irishman, "you done it on purpose."

"Mr. Dixon," said the mountaineer quietly, "I am sorry you said that, and unless you apologize for it I shall make *you* sorry."

"Apologize? Apologize to you, you son of a —?"

Zach turned a little pale and then said with a slight tremor in his voice:

"Now, then, sir it's too late; you can't apologize. You've got to fight me."

"Fair fight, gentlemen, fair fight!" cried several, and Billy Cartlet proceeded to make a ring about fifteen feet in diameter.

A fight at a corn-shucking or a log-rolling was not an uncommon thing; so all the other men gathered round the ring while the two giants walked into the center. It was a great fight and destined to bring many surprises to that group of simple-hearted mountaineers.

Dixon had plenty of pluck; he really liked the business. He forced the fighting for a while, Zach guarding easily and cautiously, and hitting him on the nose just hard enough to draw a little

blood and just often enough to keep him fighting furiously.

Gradually there came over the Irishman's face a look of amazement; he ceased forcing the fight and for a moment stood facing his opponent. For the first time he had met his match.

"Now, Dixon, will you apologize?" said the teacher, lowering his arms.

"No:—you, I won't!" he answered quickly.

Dixon was an Irishman, and would rather die than acknowledge defeat.

"Then I shall hurt you," said Zach, and suiting his actions to his words, he struck him one, two, three terrific blows, and put the Irishman on his back.

The mountaineer folded his arms across his breast and waited till his dazed antagonist staggered to his feet.

"Will you apologize now?" he asked again.

"No; damn you!" was the stubborn reply.

"Then look out," said Zach; and the next instant the spectators saw Mike's feet in the air and his toes quivering.

"Foul play!" shrieked Samiter, and leaped into the ring with a long, keen-bladed knife in his hand.

"Stop, thar!" It was Luther Satterwhite looking along the barrel of an old Colt's revolver. "You jist hold up, Joel, or I'll let the day light thoo you."

Luther was one of the big boys in Beaver Dam school and loved his teacher. Samiter knew the reputation of the lad and staggered back to his place around the ring.

"He'd apologize now, Zachie, ef he could, but he'll never do it in this world, for in my judgment, he's passed in his checks."

It was Uncle Joe Morrow who spoke. He had seen many a fight, but never one "done so nice as that."

"Fling a leetle water in Mike's face thar, boys, mebbe he'll come all right arter awhile," continued the old man.

"I didn't mean to hit him quite so hard," said the mountaineer, "I hope he'll soon be better."

Dixon groaned heavily. The teacher's counte-

nance brightened, and, looking down into the face of his antagonist, he said: "Gentlemen, I am sorry I had to do this,—the poor fellow is suffering."

The fight broke up the log-rolling. Dixon pulled through and went home a wiser man, and Joel Samiter, instead of getting revenge was himself disgusted and humiliated beyond measure.

Zach disliked such notoriety as that day's work would give him, but consoled himself with the thought that no self-respecting man could submit to such insulting language. Down in the mountaineer's heart, he was glad that during the previous year he had spent so many of his recreation hours taking boxing lessons from a bosom friend and classmate. Dixon was as powerful as Zach, and as game as Caesar, but Zach's scientific blows knocked the Irishman out and opened the eyes of all who saw them.

CHAPTER XV.

SUNDAY morning dawned clear and gray, and long before preaching time a great crowd of men, women and children had gathered at the church to discuss, recuss, and cuss the all-absorbing incident of the day before.

The average human being, whatever his stage of civilization, glories in a fight, and the inhabitants of Horse Foot were no exception to the rule. To lick Dixon, "the cock o' the walk," "the county bully," in a fair fight, "fist and skull," was an achievement calculated to put one's name on every tongue.

Zach regretted the occurrence, but he had no apologies to make. His notoriety was particularly embarrassing to him, when he walked up to the church and saw all eyes turned toward himself. And Zach knew, too, that in spite of the protestations of friendship made by so many of his neighbors after the memorable campaign meeting, there were many who would have been

glad deep down in their hearts to see Dixon knock him out. He knew, too, that on that church yard there were two factions, one, possibly the smaller, in full sympathy with all his efforts to improve himself and benefit the community; the other, the younger element, envious and jealous, and wishing him evil and only evil since he openly avowed his opposition to what they considered their most sacred right—the making and selling of “mountain dew.”

On the Eastern slope of Bald Mountain, known as “De Ball” by the denizens of its fastnesses, is a notorious cave. For many, many years, this cave was the home of wild beasts, as nature intended, and continued to be till wilder man drove them out and took possession for his own unlawful purposes. For more than fifty years, in one of its recesses, moonshiners had distilled their corn and apples. It was difficult of access, rock-ribbed and approachable only on one side. More than one officer of the law, having run the gauntlet and raided “the still,” “bit the dust” before he had reached the plains below. Jake Ilderton

inherited the cave and the still with all their bloody traditions from Steve Ilderton, his father, who fell at the hands of "de revenue" while fighting for his own, just five years before. And it was Jake's own bullet that pierced the heart of the successful raider that moonlit night while he passed "de clump o' laurel jest beyant de bridge over Little Beaverdam." Jake was considered a desperate character, four men having fallen at the bidding of "long Tom," his rifle. But Jake was kind hearted. He was passionately fond of children, revered what he called "'oman kind," and would die for "truth and jestis" anywhere and any when. "I've got no usen," he often said, "fur a dowed coward er a sneak; I loves the open truth and a fa'r fight uver time."

'Twas Saturday night. The weather was warm and a half dozen mountaineers sat around on the heads of barrels and kegs as far as they could get from the heat of the still and yet within range of flickering rays of light given out by a sputtering, odoriferous, brass lamp. Among

the loungers who had gathered to discuss the news of the week and to sample the latest output of apple-jack, were Joe Davis and Joel Samiter.

Three weeks had come and gone since the great log-rolling which came so near ending in a tragedy in which Zach, the teacher, had played so prominent a part. Samiter was sore yet over the defeat of Zeb Vance Watts, and sorer still over the lickin' Dixon, the bully, got at the log-rolling. Usually talkative, he was tonight quiet and meditative.

Davis was a small man with little wolfish eyes, dull, sandy hair that hung down over his shoulders, and a disgusting yellow beard, every end of which seemed to turn back upon its root as if endeavoring to hide itself, out of pure shame, and giving the face an appearance not unlike that of a yellow, frizzled chicken. His long, bony nose was out of plumb; it seemed to hang on one side of his face as if knocked out of joint by coming in too close contact with some man's fist. His upper teeth protruded so that he could not, under any circumstances, close his lips.

There, surrounded by granite walls, in the dim, flickering, uncertain light of the brass lamp, he made a picture long to be remembered. To make up for the many things of which she deprived the unfortunate fellow, nature gave him an extra-long tongue. Davis talked too much.

A little farther than the others from the red-hot door of the furnace was one man lying flat on his back on the dirt floor of the cave. Muscular and brawny was he, and lay with hands clasped under his head, while the stem of a cob pipe hung between his teeth, and clouds of smoke came from his lips in lazy, indifferent puffs. Jake Ilderton, king of Horse Foot Cove, laughed "in his sleeves" at the picture before him, and wondered, "whut een de name o' God was sich a lookin' thing ez Joe Davis put een dis wurl fur nohow?"

Each man "slept on his arms," as it were, for a rumor had been afloat for ten days that the raiders were on the war path and might be expected any night to make a swoop on Horse Foot still. According to the ethics of the cove, no

man was expected to visit the still unless he was willing to defend it against all raiders and die for it if need be.

Every phase of the report was discussed, experiences exchanged, and incidents of many previous raids were told and retold until long after midnight. All had heard that raiders were astir, but not one could give the name of the informer, and that seemed to be of more interest to the party than the fact that a raid was imminent. In Horse Foot Cove, the unwritten law was, "The informer must die."

"I dassent say fur sartin," said Joe Davis, kicking the side of a barrel on which he sat, "I dassent say fur sartin, but I's jest bleegeed ter b'lieve dat de teacher is de man what gin de still away. I bleegeed ter think it. Ye see, two year ago and leetle better, when De Ball wus a-shakin' and folks was skeerdt outen der shoes, a great big man and a lot o' yuther fellers kim up here fum sumus down een de flat. Dey called daselves students an' pertended to be zaminin 'De Ball'; dey stuck sumpin een de springs, and pecked on

de rocks and medjured de hills, an' Zach kim 'long wid 'em an' showed 'em uver whar. Folks didn't lak it den kase Zack was wid 'em peekin' 'round de mounting. Some uv 'em 'lowed den Zach wus agwine too fur. He des nachily covorted 'round de mounting p'intin' out uverthing."

In the early 70's, Bald Mountain did behave in such a manner as to frighten the mountaineers. Dishes were rattled and broken and strange rumbling noises were heard. Prof. Warren DuPre, of Wofford College, took his class in Geology to visit the mountain, and spent several days examining the rocks and springs.

"Some 'lowed de whole bilin uv 'em," continued Davis, "wus jes a-lookin' out fur de smoke o' de still."

"Den agin, Zach's gittin too all-fired smart. He don't talk lak we-uns no more. He wants uverboddy to go to church and Sunday School. Ye know he tuk up a Sunday School 'bout a mont' ago an' he wants uverboddy to jine. He gits up an' talks, he do. He says sat stiddier

sot an' all sich ez that. I tell ye he air a bad aig. Some says he's a wolf in sheep's clothin'. He pertends ter be pow'ful 'ligious. Meks a prar ez long ez fum here ter de eend uv de cave. I went over las' Sunday."

"Did he do you enny good, Joe?" interrupted one.

"Me? no; how de devil ye spec him ter do me enny good?"

"Dat so, scuse me; I spec hit'd strain de Lord hisself to do good ter sich a critter ez you is." Then a hearty laugh at Joe's expense.

"Ge'mens, you oughter bin thar ter hear Miss Flennigin lambast Zach. 'Zachie,' she 'lowed, 'I wus glad whenst ye tuk up the Sunday School, an' hit did do my ole heart good so long ez ye teached the childurn 'bout the Lord and sich; but now whenst ye git ter tellin' 'em 'bout obeyin' de law and bein' good and keepin' sober, I hain't no funder use fer ye—I'm agin ye.' "

"Old Zach 'lowed, 'Why, Miss Flennigin, don't you want the childurn teached to be good and obey the law?' "

“An’ what did she say?”

“Lord, mun, you oughter seed her eyes. She jes rared back on her hunkers, she did, and she ’lowed, ‘No, sar, narry time; not sich laws ez we-uns hez. Don’t you know ez how my daddy wuz kilt by the revenues, and does you spec me ter teach my childurn to ’bey de law arter dat? No, sir; an’ ef I wus jes a man I would mek you stop sich teachin’ ez this, er I’d show ye.’ ”

“An’ whut did Zach say?”

“Gosh, man, he turned jes ez red ez a beet, he did, an’ he ’lowed: ‘Miss Flennigin, ye air a ’oman, an’ kin say whut you please; I can’t holp myself. If ye wus a man, you wouldn’t. I’m agin stillin’ an’ I’m agin law-breakin’. I’m gwine ter teach the childurn to ’bey the law an’ let liquor ’lone.’ ”

“Boys, sho ez ye air born, Zach air the man we air arter. Jest say the word,” patting the long, blue barrel of his rifle, “an’ I shall put ’im ter sleep.”

“Waal, do it, Joe; do it afore another Sat’d night.”

"Dat's right," seconded two or three.

"Shet yo' durned mouths, ye set o' white-livered cowards. Here ye be a plannin' fer ter kill a man jes beca'se he air got the grit ter stan' up and tel ye whut he b'lieves air right. Shame on ye, ye cowardly curs."

It was Jake Ilderton who spoke, and he was now leaning on one elbow and shaking his fist at the men who had listened so patiently to Davis's harangue.

"An' you, Joe Davis," he continued, "ye dinged little measley skeeter, Zach kin tek ye atwixt his fingers and blow ye over de Ball, be he mind ter. Ye aint no bigger'n a jay bird, but ye kin mek ez much fuss wi' that thar bill o' yourn ez ef ye wus a woodpecker shor nuff. Say another word, ye mis'r'ble little b'iled owl, an' I'll chuck ye head fo'most into this here furnis."

Jake Ilderton was king in Horse Foot Cove; his ipse dixit was law. Joe Davis had no more to say.

"Now, listen, you fellers," continued Ilderton

—after refilling his pipe—“listen ter me, and I’ll tell ye sumpin:

“I hearn this report. So las’ Sat’d day I got to thinkin’ ’bout it, an’ I jes thunk ’bout it till I got desprit. I thunk ’bout that night when pap wus kilt, an’ I jes mounted my horse an’ rid out cross kintry thar hopin’ an’ a-prayin’ I mout meet some revenue sneakin’ ’round. I wanted t^r kill somebody. I kim in sight o’ Zach’s. I jes says, ‘Well, I’ll ride over and see Zach, an’ ef he don’t talk right I’ll put a eend ter him.’ Zach wus plantin’ turnip seeds. I says, ‘Good evenin’.’

“Zach ’lowed, ‘Why, howdy, Jake; I’m glad ter see yer; light.’

“I says, ‘No, I hain’t time—come ter de fence, Zach.’ He kim.

“‘Now,’ says I, ‘I have hearn that the raiders air aroun’ an’ that ye air the informer. I kim over ter find out if dat is true.’

“I jes hilt my han’ on my pistol, an’ hit cocked, an’ Zach seed me but he nuver flickered; he jes

zackly looked me square een the eye. Den he 'lowed:

“ ‘Now, look a-here, Jake, air you crazy? Don't you know I don't drink liquor? Air I uver bin ter your still? I don't know whar it is. How kin I inform whar it is? No, Jake, dat ain't my business. I'm agin liquor, an' agin makin' it, but my work is ter teach the childurn to let it alone, an' arter awhile there'll be none o' it made. Now, Jake, ef you wants ter shoot me fer dat, jes drap in your little pills here fast ez you please.' An' he jes nachily pulled open his shirt bosom an' hilt it open an' looked me square in the eye.

“ ‘I knowed the man wus a-telling the truth, an' I jes nachily tuk my han' off my gun, an' says, 'Scuse me, Zach, I mout knowed 'twus a lie. So menny people hev laid it on ye, I jes 'cluded I'd drap een an' ax ye.'

“ ‘I tell ye, boys, a man whut the childurn lays sich store by can't be a informer. Bless your soul, my little Dorinda jes thinks her teacher is nachily de bes' man on de yearth, an' thar's Luther Satterwhite says Zach is a born gen'man. Guess

you 'members Luther, don't you, Joel? De bes' grit een de Cove, ef he is jis a boy."

Jake had not mentioned this interview before, being heartily ashamed of even suspecting the teacher; but now felt constrained to talk of it and to use the harsh language he did when he heard his companions planning to kill the best man in the neighborhood.

Day was breaking when the crowd dispersed. Davis was smarting under the language used by Jake Ilderton. Nudging Samiter, at the mouth of the cave, he said, holding up his long rifle: "Joel, she kin talk jes ez strong ez Jake—lay low."

CHAPTER XVI.

MONDAY MORNING early found Joe Davis crawling over logs and rocks, picking his way through underbrush toward the road leading from Zach's home to the school house. Taking advantage of the rumor current, he determined to "put Zach to sleep," despite the cursing he got from Jake. At eight o'clock Zach passed within range of his rifle. Joe raised his gun, but his hand trembled, and he lowered the piece without touching the trigger. He cursed himself for a coward, and the next morning, having selected another position, repeated the effort with the same result. Now, thoroughly disgusted with himself, he determined to make one more attempt. So in the afternoon of the next day, he squatted behind a huge chestnut tree over whose roots Zach would walk on his return home after school.

The shouts and laughter of the children as they made their way over the hills and across the valleys, informed him that school was out. Nervous

and excited, he clutched his rifle and looked intently through an opening in the laurel through which he expected to shoot the teacher.

The murderous intent of the assassin was so great that he neglected the opening in his rear and knew not that anyone was near him until the cracking of a dry stick turned his eyes like a flash behind him. There, within six feet of him and looking with astonishment upon him, was Katie Langford.

Joe's embarrassment was pitiable. A flash of lightning from that clear sky would not have disturbed him so.

"What in the world are you doing here, Mr. Davis?" asked the astonished girl.

"O, good evenin', Miss Katie; how does you-uns do?"

"What are you doing here, sir?" she demanded.

"O, I jes heeard a turkey gobble, and wus jes a-watchin' here ter see ef I couldn't git a crack at him."

The indignant girl said no more, but walked

by him with a glance that said, "I know your little game, and I've spoiled it." And she had. Katie kept the path for a hundred yards and stepped out into the public road where she had promised to meet Zach and go across the ridge to visit a mutual friend. Davis sneaked off through the laurel toward the hovel he called his home, and, gritting his teeth, declared with an oath that Providence didn't intend to have a hair of the teacher "toch."

Katie was trembling with excitement when Zach took her hand in his. She told him quickly, almost breathlessly, of her discovery, and urged him to take steps at once to have the would-be assassin arrested and incarcerated as a precautionary measure.

Zach laughed at the girl's agitation, but assured her that the danger was now past. "Davis," said he, "is a contemptible little coward, mean enough to shoot me from ambush, and he is no doubt hired by some other scoundrel to do that; but now that he has been discovered in the very effort to do the dirty deed, he dare



HE DETERMINED TO "PUT ZACH TO SLEEP"

not go farther. Your coming, however, Katie, was indeed providential. Joe Davis is a sneak, and, I believe, for one silver dollar, would kill his best friend. But, though very low in the scale of humanity, he is no fool, and I shall have no more trouble from him."

The trembling girl, grateful for her providential coming, dropped her head on the shoulder of her lover and sobbed like a child. Zach kissed her tears away and led her off toward the home of their friend.

That evening when Zach left his sweetheart on the steps at her father's door, he asked her to go with him on Saturday afternoon to visit the family of Jake Ilderton.

Said he, "I believe Mrs. Ilderton is a good woman: her children are so neat, and clean, and polite. No one but a good mother could send from her home such children as those. As a teacher, I want to know all I can about the homes of my pupils." Katie was delighted to accompany him, but would not let him leave her that

night without a promise to keep a sharp eye out for Joe Davis.

Mrs. Ilderton was not expecting company Saturday afternoon, but everything was neat and tidy. The very chairs had been scoured that morning, and every particle of the inexpensive furniture, touched here and there by a gentle woman's hands, was inviting.

The large, old-fashioned fire-place was filled with evergreens, and old Steve Ilderton's clock stood in the corner and lazily ticked off the fleeting moments. A picture of George Washington hung over the front door, and one of Andrew Jackson over the door leading to the kitchen. The milk "piggin" and the churn, faultlessly clean, stood inverted on a shelf just outside the kitchen door. The children, little Jake and Dorinda, were clean and neatly attired, and vied with each other in welcoming "de teacher and Miss Kate." Jake Ilderton "happened in" a few minutes after the arrival of the guests and joined heartily with his wife and little ones in giving them welcome.

During the afternoon Jake and Zach walked out to look at Jake's "turnip patch." "Dat slipe o' lan' over thar," said the host, "I'm gwine ter fix fur a brag piece o' wheat. I wants ter hev a ten rail fence put 'round it, an' den haul out on it sixty loads o' stable manure. Does ye reckon I could git ole Jack ter do dat work fur me?" he asked.

"No; Uncle Jack is suffering with rheumatism. He can't do a lick o' work now. My school will close next Friday. After that I should be very glad to do your work for you, Jake."

"Why, Zach, is ye jokin'? I knowed ye didn't mind splittin' rails, but I 'lowed ye hed sholy got above scatterin' manure," said Jake.

"No, indeed; not if there is an honest dollar in it. I'm not afraid to do any kind of work that's honorable. I need all the money I can get. I must go back to college again before long. I'll do that work for you and do it well and as cheap as anybody."

"Waal, sir, I'm jest powerful glad to git ye, Zach; I kin git a han' fur fifty cents a day, but

I'll jes adzackly gi' ye seventy-five cents a day and board ye. I'll jest do that very thing—whut says ye?"

"Just my dinner," said Zach. "I shall be obliged to take care of mother at night, so I'll get breakfast and supper at home."

"All right," said Jake. "Ef that suits ye, hit suits me; but the wittles is here fer ye, Zach, an' ye air more'n welcome."

"Then look for me soon Monday morning week to begin work," said Zack. And the two returned to the house.

After a pleasant afternoon the visitors turned their faces homeward. Jake excelled himself in his efforts to show them that he appreciated their visit. Dorinda flung a kiss at Zach as he turned to close the gate, and then said to her mother: "Mamma, I do wush you could hear Mr. Zach prayin' fur we-uns uver mornin' at school."

"Do he pray fur we-uns honey?"

"Yes, mam, he do. He prays fur uverboddy."

"I knowed he wus a good man, but I didn't s'pose he tuk time to pray fur we-uns." And

with tear-dimmed eyes the mother turned her face toward the kitchen.

Mrs. Ilderton was a pale-faced little woman without culture, but with the bounding, throbbing heart of a devoted mother; a heart that knew "its own sorrow." A pleasant smile flitted across her face at intervals, but underneath it and back of all her efforts to appear cheerful, there was an indefinable something that told of unacknowledged heartaches, of a sorrow that must be buried in one's own heart and burn itself out in a single life.

Zach was accustomed to study human nature closely. During the afternoon he had diagnosed this case successfully.

Mrs. Ilderton had, at the age of fifteen, "run-off" from her parents and married Jake Ilderton, a well-known, much-dreaded young moonshiner. Jake had been kind to her—as kind as he knew how to be. Their first four children were buried near the base of the big boulder overlooking the spring—the two little ones were left to Jake and his Margaret.

“Mrs. Ilderton’s face is a study,” said Zach to Katie, as they walked homeward. “She has buried four children, I know, but that fact will not account for that look of hers—she has a living trouble. She is a Christian, and devoted to her children and craves a better life for them. I believe it is Jake’s life that’s drying up her heart and scorching her very life. God pity her.”

CHAPTER XVII.

For out of the heart man believeth unto righteousness.—PAUL.

SCHOOL CLOSED Friday, August 31. Monday morning bright and early Zach stood at Jake Ilderton's gate. He carried with him a heavy maul and wedge and a long, keen-bladed axe. He was ready for business.

"Good mornin', Zachie, good mornin'; we ain't done eatin' yit; kim in and tek a bite," was the welcome he received.

"No, thank you, Jake—I've had breakfast."

"Waal, come in an' wet yo' goozle."

"No, thank you."

"You won't kim in an' tek a drap o' apple-jack jes fur yo' stummick sake?"

"No; excuse me, Jake; I don't need it; my stomach digests all I'll give it. Hard work is better for me than apple-jack."

"Waal, dad-burn sich a critter!"

The two men walked off toward the woods where the rails were to be split.

"Now, Zack," said Jake, "here's the timber; light een, and I'll step back and finish breakfast and then go to my work at the still."

"Yes; I wish you would just quit that work, Jake; once and forever, and come along and help me split these rails."

"Tut, man; don't ye know hit's a heap easier ter mek liquor an' sell it than hit is ter dig a livin' outen these rocks?"

"Easier, now Jake; but you are damming up the waters; you are piling up trouble for yourself and your children," said Zach. "Look out."

"O, you be durned, Zach, an' stop yo' preachin'; I didn't hire ye ter preach—I hired ye ter split rails."

Jake Ilderton was a shaggy, uncouth thing to be called a man, but he loved his children with a devotion that was beautiful, and Zach's allusion to the curse that he might bring upon them stung him to the quick. He cared nothing for himself, but he went to the still that morning an unhappier man.

The timber was fine and the weather was per-

fect. So Zach set for himself a task of 250 rails a day. He was now within one year of his diploma. His health was splendid, his mother was alive, and with a few more dollars he would have enough money to take his diploma and "owe no man anything." These thoughts passed through his mind, quickened his pulse-beat and the strong man drove his keen blade into the large timber with such force as sent it almost to the eye of the axe and brought great beads of sweat to his manly forehead. Zach really enjoyed the work. He was alone, but in good company. In the last few years he had learned enough of the mysteries of nature to wonder how anyone could ever feel lonesome with a book of such marvelous beauty spread wide open before him. Every stone had for him a message now; while every bud or bird was to him a printed page.

The midday meal with Jake's interesting family was immensely enjoyed. The conversation took rather a wide range for such a company. Jake was glad to go to the house when the dinner horn blew, while the pale-faced mother, Dorinda

and little Jake, so fond of the teacher, found the dinner hour all too short.

Things went well till Friday. Dorinda complained of "feelin' bad" and refused to eat. Zach examined the child's pulse and found that she had high temperature. He remarked that the child had considerable fever and ought to have a doctor to see her at once.

Jake sent off for Dr. Ramsheur.

"He's jest a 'yearb doctor,' but he's all we hes in these parts, an' uverboddy sends fur 'im," said the father.

Dr. Ramsheur came, said the child was "toler'ble sick," and gave her a strong concoction made of some roots taken from his mink-skin bag.

"The leetle gall 'll be better in a day er two," he said as he went down the steps, "but I'll kim back termorrow jest to see how she's gittin' along." He came and came again, changing his "yearb tea" every time.

On the fourth day the fever was raging, the child was very red and restless and begged for Zach to remain by her side. Zach took the

father to one side and said: "Jake, Dorinda is a very sick child. I don't know, but I'm afraid she has scarlet fever."

"My God!" ejaculated the distressed father. He remembered the terrible scourge just beyond Bald mountain about six weeks before.

"Great God, Zach, whut shill I do?"

"Don't get excited, Jake, we must have a doctor. Send for Dr. Jones. He lives fifteen miles from here, but he has treated scarlet fever, and you must have him."

Jake lost no time in getting Jim, his hired man, off after Dr. Jones. "Don't spar' ole Fannie, Jim," he said. "Fetch the Doctor, ef you hev to leave the ole mar' dead een the road."

Jim loved Dorinda, as did everybody who knew the yellow-haired child of eight summers. He rode hard and fast over the mountain, Fan, the sinewy little chestnut-sorrel, responding without a protest to every touch of his heavy heel. But the doctor was away from home, and Jim rode far into the night before he found him.

At 8 o'clock the next morning Dr. Jones dis-

mounted at the gate of the notorious Horse Foot moonshiner.

Jake and Zach and the faithful mother had sat through the long, weary hours of the night watching by the side of the little sufferer. Just before day there was slight evidence of delirium. Zach noticed the first symptom—he was watching for it; but he said nothing of it, hoping that the parents might not observe it. The child clasped her hands and uttered a prayer that she had heard her teacher make at school, and then clutched at some imaginary object.

Poor Jake! he trembled now, and said in a half sobbing way, “Zachie, fur God’s sake, ain’t she teched een her mind?”

Before the sympathetic teacher could speak, the child turned her eyes toward the door and said, in a sweet, childish, pleading voice, “Come in, he won’t hurt ye.” And then, as if disappointed, she turned her eyes on Jake, and said, “Pappy, them’s angels, but they won’t come in—they air skeerdt o’ you.”

Sweet, patient and gentle Margaret Ilderton

buried her face in her hands, large tears ran down the cheeks of the faithful teacher, and poor Jake sobbed piteously.

"We'll not give her up yet, Jake," said Zach, applying another cold cloth to her parched brow. "We'll take her to the Great Physician," pointing upward, "and ask him to help Dr. Jones, when he comes."

Dr. Jones stepped into the room. With just a nod at the three anxious watchers, he walked to the side of the bed, and looking down into the face of the child, said, slowly but emphatically, "S-c-a-r-l-e-t f-e-v-e-r."

The intelligent physician, who had treated so many cases of scarlet fever, knew what to do, and went to work without loss of time.

The distressed father watched his every movement. After a while he said, "Doctor, kin ye save the leetle gal?"

"God Almighty knows, my friend," was the reply. "I'll do the best I can, but I tell you now, she's a desperately ill child."

That was poor consolation to poor, ignorant

Jake Ilderton. His heart sank within him; he ran out into the yard and wept bitter tears. "My God," he said, "ef I knowed how to pray, I'd pray; but I nuver prayed, I can't pray." Then, looking up, he said, "Jesus, spar' my leetle gal." Miserable, O, how miserable was poor Jake! He couldn't stay out of the house, and he couldn't stay in. His very heart strings were being torn as never before.

The faithful physician watched patiently by the side of the little child until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Then giving explicit directions to Zach and the mother, he remounted his tired horse and rode back across the mountains. He promised to be back before 10 o'clock tomorrow, if he could, but charged them to watch closely, for he believed the crisis would be reached before another sun would rise.

At 8 o'clock in the evening the child was quiet and resting. A neighbor, a sensible woman, had come in to help watch through the night. To her and the mother Zach repeated the directions of the physician, and told them he would run over

to see how his mother was getting on. He promised to be back in an hour.

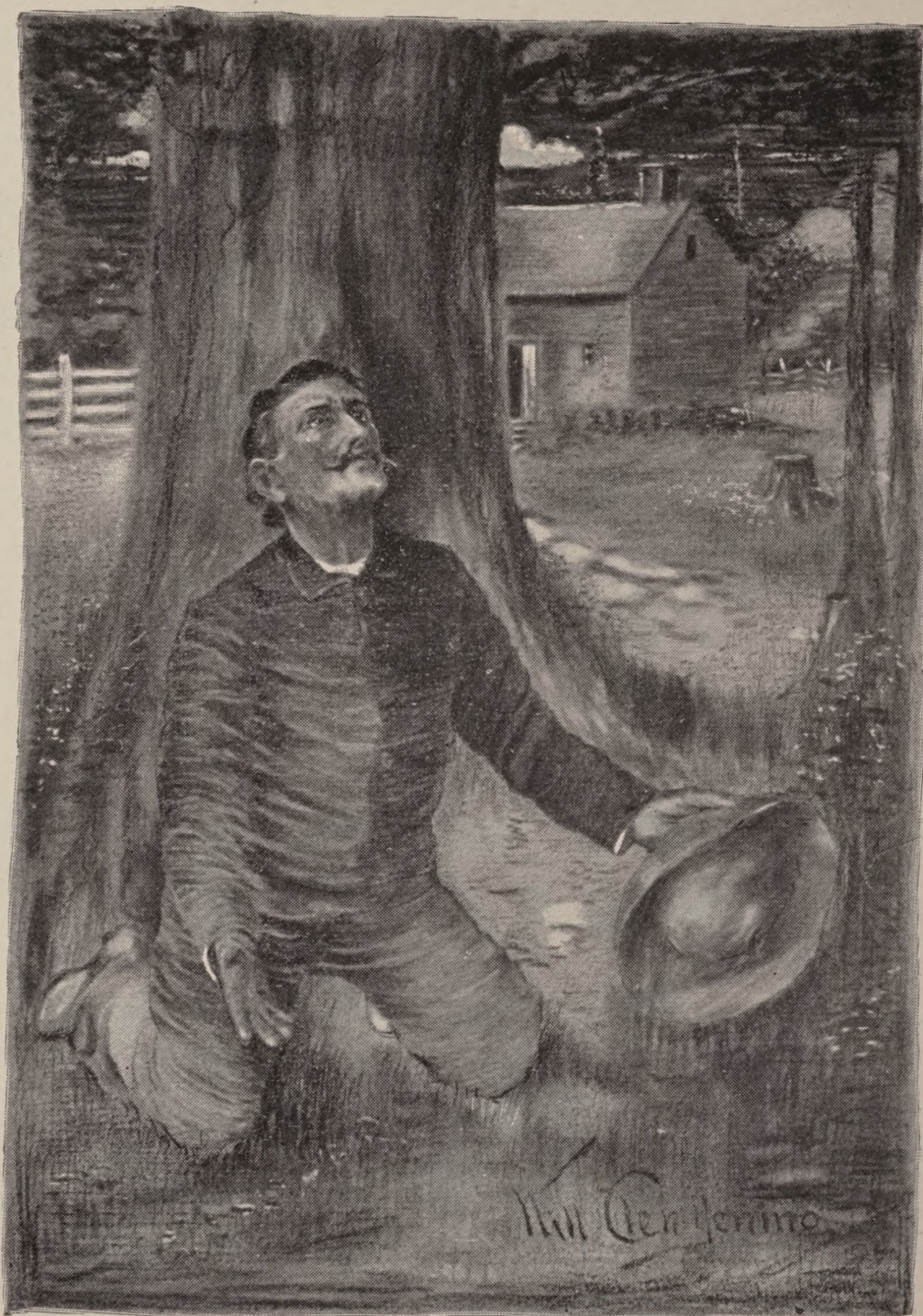
A hundred yards from the house Zach repeated the words: "And a little child shall lead them." He looked back and saw poor, wild Jake standing in the door, looking up at the stars and wringing his hands. Then turning his own eyes toward the heavens where the stars were twinkling, the big-hearted teacher said: "Father, spare the dear child, if it please thee; but whether she live or die, save Jake Ilderton, save Jake Ilderton!"

Jake sat down by the little one's bed, and with the great rough hand of a loving, suffering father, he touched as gently as he could the hand of the child he loved better than his own life. The little sufferer opened her eyes for a second, and then, in a clear, distinct voice, uttered two words, "Blood, whiskey."

Jake Ilderton knew nothing for several minutes. When he regained consciousness, he ran out into the yard, threw himself on his knees, and lifting his eyes toward the hills, cried out in all the anguish of his soul;

"O, God, hev it kim ter this! hev it kim ter this! Is ye tekin' the child fur my doin's? O, Lordy, spar' my chile and tek me. I ain't no 'count, tek me. I bin a mighty mean man, but I'm mighty sorry fur it. Please, Jesus, jes spar' the leetle gal. I been a mean man. I kilt four men. I kilt Josh Lindsay, but I wus young then and didn't know no better. I kilt Cy Bell. He cussed me an' I kilt him. Lordy, I'm mighty sorry. Then I kilt Ben Fowler. He ruint my ister, Lord, an' I hed to kill 'im, I jes hed to kill 'im. Then I kilt the revenue. He kilt my daddy, an' I jes kilt him. I'm mighty sorry, Lord, but I can't fetch 'em 'back ter life. O, Lordy, spar' the leetle gal, an' I'll nuver kill another man ez long ez I live. Spar' my chile, O, Lord, an' I'll jine the church, I'll quit cussin'."

Poor, helpless Jake! the light of his home was about to be extinguished, and he was in the darkness of despair. Staggering to the fence, he cried out once again, "O, Jesus Marster, spar' de leetle gall jes spar' de leetle gal, an' I'll sar ve yc right



"O. GOD, IS YE 'TEKIN' THE CHILD FUR MY DOIN'S?"

Spar' my leetle Dorinda, Lord, an' I'll nuver mek another drap o' apple-jack, an' I'll lick enny man dat tries ter mek it in Horse Foot Cove. O, Jesus, spar' Dorinda, an' I'll bus' de haid outen uver bar'l o' apple-jack I've got. Lordy, sp— "

Jake leaped to his feet and ran into the house. His countenance was all aglow. "Dorinda will git well," he cried, "Dorinda will git well; sumpin' told me so!" He was about to take Dorinda in his arms, but was prevented by the faithful wife, who pleaded with him to keep quiet and not wake the child now resting. Zach returned after a while and found Jake in the yard leaping for very joy and praising God for His promise.

The crisis was passed. Dr. Jones arrived at nine next morning, and as soon as he glanced at the child, said, "Dorinda is better this morning."

Jake was standing at the doctor's back. When he heard the words, "Dorinda is better," he dropped on his knees and cried out: "Thank God! I telled ye so! I telled ye so!" Then turning, with one bound cleared the steps and ran rapidly toward the still,

Jim, his assistant, was there at work. "Roll uver bar'l o' apple-jack out here, Jim," Jake shouted, "roll 'em out an' let me send 'em to hell whar they belong."

Jim protested against such great waste.

"Shet yo' mouth," cried Jake, "I promised the Lord, and ivery drap shall go."

Seizing an axe he began bursting in barrel heads, and ripe old apple-jack commenced rolling in a great stream down the mountain side. "Go, ye bit o' hell-fire! Go back to the yearth fum whenst ye kim!" he shouted. "I'll nuver mek another drap o' ye, an' I kin lick enny man whut tries to mek ye een Horse Foot."

Jade Ilderton had entered into a solemn covenant with Margaret's God. He joined the church, told his experience reverently, and all the cove saw that the notorious moonshiner was another man. The whole congregation listened in profound silence, many of them in tears, to Jake's experience. Wiping his moist eyes on his coat sleeve, he closed with these words:

"Friends, I hev been a mighty mean man, but

I mean to sarve God the balance o' my days. I hain't no larnin', ye know, and can't talk fur 'im much, an' I can't sing, but, thank God, I kin fight fur 'im, an' hit will jest gi' me pledjure to do it. I gin ye warnin' now, friends; I promised the Lord I would lick enny man whut tries to mek liquor in Horse Foot, an' I'll do it. He spar'd my leetle Dorinda an' furgive my sins, an' now I'm His'n to the eend uv life."

Strong men wept that day, and more than one woman shouted aloud the praise of Almighty God. Margaret Ilderton's pale face was now radiant. A flood of light had come into her darkened soul, and for her life had a purer, sweeter, nobler meaning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HAVING mended shoes for his neighbors, having dug ditches, split rails, scattered manure—having done anything to earn an honest penny, Zach re-entered college now for the last time, set his face toward the coveted goal and resolutely fought his way through difficulties until he reached the end of his senior year.

The much dreaded final examination is passed, and the mountaineer feels that he has fought a good fight. And he has. He has made a good record as a student, he has maintained his integrity, he has honestly won his diploma, and he can look the world in the face and say of a truth: "I owe no man anything."

It is commencement day again. Eight long years have passed since the mountaineer first entered that auditorium. Then, he sat in a pew, an obscure backwoodsman; to-day he sits on the rostrum, the most observed, because he is the largest and handsomest man of the class—he has

won his place by persistent, uncompromising blows.

The speakers were arranged in alphabetical order, the mountaineer's name beginning with W., appearing last on the program, and the subject of his address, "Labor Omnia Vincet."

The other speeches delivered, the venerable President of the College briefly related the incident of a young mountaineer's accidental attendance upon the commencement exercises in that hall eight years before, and of his resolve before he left the auditorium to speak on that platform some day himself. Then he alluded to the young man's fight with poverty, his manly independence, his unflinching courage, his high sense of honor, his devotion to duty, and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me real pleasure to introduce as the next speaker that same mountaineer, Mr. Zachariah Timothy Whetstone, of North Carolina."

There had never occurred in that hall at any other time such a demonstration of popular feeling. The kind but truthful words just spoken by

the President, the mountaineer's great popularity among the students and in the city, his magnificent physique and striking personality—all these set the audience wild.

The distinguished looking gentleman about whom so many questions had been asked by strangers present, advanced to the front of the stage, but the applause was so great and continued so long, he could not begin his address. He politely bowed his appreciation, but that only increased the demonstration. The college boys in the galleries thundered their applause as only boys can do, enthusiastic ladies wore their delicate fans to frazzles on the back of seats and gray-bearded men with moistened eyes clapped their hands in hearty approval; nor did this cease until the President raised his hand in appeal to the audience. The mountaineer became a little nervous, his muscles twitched slightly, but his accustomed smile played all the while over his handsome face. He uttered the first sentence in clear, distinct tones that penetrated the remotest corner

of the spacious auditorium, and again the applause was renewed and continued several seconds.

There was one woman near the rostrum who did not join in the applause. While others around her applauded, she buried her face in her hands and wept; wept not tears of grief or sorrow, but sweet, precious, joyous tears—the man thus honored was her baby boy.

The exercises concluded, the President of the College, and many distinguished visitors, hastened to congratulate the happy mother of the hero of the occasion. The proud mother was too full to express her thanks, but looked them through her smiles and tears, and in her heart thanked God for him, who, to her, was the greatest man on earth.

The mountaineer, as soon as he could free himself from the hands of his admiring classmates and fellow-students, made his way to his mother, and, imprinting upon her happy face an affectionate kiss, handed her his diploma, saying: "Here, mother, take this; it is yours, not mine." She clutched the parchment and pressed it to

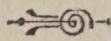
her heart. She knew that she could never read it, for it was written in Latin; but she also knew that it was the testimonial of the greatest triumph of her son. Then mother and son, arm in arm, walked out of the hall, the embodiment of unalloyed, immeasurable happiness.

Has the reader become sufficiently interested to wonder what became of the subject of this sketch? You shall know. He returned to his mountain home, and, as soon as he was able, erected on his own land a neat, commodious school building in which, during all these years, he has conducted a successful, prosperous high school. He has managed his mother's little farm well; has bought lands adjoining it, and is pastor of three Baptist Churches nestled among the hills he loves so well. The Rev. Zachariah Timothy Whetstone is the best beloved and most influential citizen in all that mountain region, and his hard, common sense, successful school and fearless preaching have done more than all the laws and guns of Uncle Sam to stop illicit distilling in that highly favored section of North Carolina.

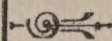
Old Jack was faithful to the end of his days, and now sleeps in a well-kept grave near the Big Gum Spring. Towser and Zeno long ago ceased to challenge the raccoon and the squirrel. Each had a decent burial, the faithful master saying: "The good old dogs always did the best they could—what living thing could do more?"

Did Zach marry Katie? She is the mistress of his home, the guiding star of his life, and both are happy in the lives of their two children—little Katie, the duplicate of her mother, and young Zach, "a chip off the old block."

The aged mother still lives to bless the home of her stalwart son, and every Sunday hears the gospel preached by him into whose baby ears she first whispered the name of JESUS.



THE END



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